

THE PHILOSOPHY
OF PLOTINUS

William Ralph Inge

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by

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Preface to the Third Edition

IN preparing this final edition for the press, I have read through the whole of the *Enneads again*. I have also revised my book throughout, and have made some hundreds of small corrections and alterations.

A good deal of work has been done upon Plotinus in the last ten years. Professors Dodds and Sleeman have published a large number of textual emendations, some of which are important as clearing up obscurities caused by errors in the manuscripts. In spite of all that has been done to remove such errors, the text of Plotinus is still faulty in many places.

Of recent books on the philosophy of Plotinus, the most important is that of Fritz Heinemann (*Platin*, Leipzig, 1921). Heinemann claims not only to have restored the chronological order in which the different parts of the *Enneads* were written, but to have discovered considerable interpolations, which he ascribes to friends and disciples of the philosopher. He also asserts that the doctrine of Plotinus changed materially between the earliest and the latest parts of his book. In the earlier chapters he cannot find the characteristic Plotinian doctrine of 'the One.' I have tried to judge this theory on its merits, but I am not convinced. It is unlikely a, *priori* that a thinker who wrote nothing before the age of fifty, and died sixteen years later, should have altered his views on fundamental questions as he went on. Nor do I find anything more than a slight change of emphasis. On the Problem of Evil it might be possible to find contradictions between earlier and later books; but I do not think that Plotinus ever dealt confidently with this problem. On the whole, I agree with Arnou, that 'la doctrine est bien la même dans tous les livres.'

Another book which I have found valuable is René Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la Philosophie de Plotin* (Paris). N. O. Lossky, *The World as an Organic Whole* (Oxford, 1928), is interesting as a modern philosophic work avowedly based on the *Enneads*.

Mr. Whittaker has brought out an enlarged edition of his admirable book *The Neoplatonists*. Mr. Stephen Mackenna has now translated the whole of the *Enneads* except the Sixth Book. The later volumes confirm the high opinion which I formed of his work after reading the first. I earnestly hope that he will endure to the completion of his labour of love. I have profited by some of Professor Taylor's criticisms of the first edition in *Mind* (1919).

There has been, I rejoice to observe, a great change in the estimate of Plotinus as a philosopher. Some of the errors against which I protested ten years ago are seldom any longer repeated, and it is now more generally recognised that he is one of the greatest names in the history of philosophy. Professor Dodds' little book, *Select Passages Illustrating Neoplatonism* (S.P.C.K., 1923), is very sound, and will be helpful to students beginning the subject.

My method of treating my subject was necessarily determined by the conditions of the Gifford Lectureship; this has been forgotten by one or two critics. But I was glad to be obliged to treat Neoplatonism as a living, not as a dead, philosophy; for so I believe it to be. In choosing so to deal with it, some parts of the *Enneads* seemed to me more vital than others. I could not, for example, include a detailed discussion of the Categories in the Sixth Ennead. I wish the book to be regarded as a contribution to the philosophy of religion, rather than a treatise on general metaphysics. My last reading of Plotinus has only confirmed me in my conviction that his value as a religious philosopher can hardly be over-estimated. I know no more powerful defence of the *religious* view of life, which bids us pass through things temporal 'in the spirit of a worshipper,' to use a phrase of Bishop Gore's. Plotinus sets himself to prove dialectically, as a Platonist must attempt to do, the soundness of the upward track which he is treading in his inward experience. He names the rungs on Jacob's ladder, but, as I have said, his view of reality is much rather a picture of a continuous spectrum, in which the colours merge into each other, unseparated by any hard lines. Most of the waverings and apparent contradictions which schematists have found in the *Enneads* are thus to be accounted for.

For him, 'the good life' itself is its own reward, and we must look for no other. He disdains the threats and promises of ecclesiasticism. His profound

indifference to worldly affairs and the problems of civilisation puts the modern spirit out of sympathy with him; but is not this indifference also characteristic of the Gospels? The riddle of the Sphinx for the twentieth century is how to preserve what is true and noble in the idea of evolutionary progress, without secularising our religion and losing our hold on the unchanging perfection of God. This problem was not so insistent either in the first century or in the third. Plotinus will teach us that there can be no evolution except in relation to a timeless background which does not itself evolve. This is, of course, the Christian view, and I believe it will vindicate itself against the rival view of a Deity who is vitally involved in the fortunes of His creatures.

W. R. INGE.

DEANERY, ST. PAUL'S.

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Preface to the First Edition

THE Gifford Lectureships have given many English and some foreign scholars the pleasantest of introductions to the life of the Scottish Universities. The unique charm of St. Andrews is but half realised by those who only know it as the Mecca of the golfer. Those who have had the privilege of being admitted to the academic society of the ancient city will understand why Andrew Lang confessed that even Oxford had a successful rival in his affections. The present writer will always look back upon his two visits to St. Andrews as the brightest interlude in four sad years.

It is my agreeable duty to acknowledge the help which I have received from several friends. I have been encouraged and gratified by the interest in my lectures shown by those two distinguished Platonists, Professors Burnet and Taylor, of St. Andrews. For several years I have received the kindest sympathy in my philosophical studies from Lord Haldane. Three Oxford friends have been good enough to read my book in manuscript or in the proof-sheets: Captain Ross, Fellow of Oriel; the Rev. H. H. Williams, D.D., Principal of St. Edmund Hall; and Mr. C. C. J. Webb, Fellow of Magdalen and at present Gifford Lecturer at Aberdeen.

Introductory

THE honour which the University of St. Andrews has conferred upon me has given me the opportunity of delivering in the form of lectures the substance of a book on which I have worked, with many interruptions, for about seventeen years. My interest in Plotinus began while I was writing my Bampton Lectures on Christian Mysticism, which I gave at Oxford in 1899. Mysticism is a very wide subject, and the name has been used more loosely even than 'Socialism.' We are unable in English to mark that distinction between the higher and the lower kinds of mysticism, which the Germans indicate when they call the one *Mystik* and the other *Mystizismus*. To many persons a mystic is a dreamer who takes a detached and unpractical view of life. Others suppose the essence of mysticism to be the search for 'loose types of things through all degrees,' as if nature were a divine cryptogram, the key to which is furnished through some kind of occultism. The Roman Catholic Church associates the word closely with what are called mystical phenomena, those strange experiences of the cloistered ascetic which that Church ascribes to the direct agency of supernatural powers, benign or maleficent, and which modern psychology believes to be purely subjective and for the most part pathological. There are few stranger things in literature than the semi-official Roman Catholic books on 'mystical theology,' compiled with great learning and a show of scientific method, but consisting largely of cases of levitation, incandescence, transverberation, visions and auditions of every kind, which the mystics of the cloister, many of whom have been canonised as saints, have recorded as their own experiences. The main task for the theologians and spiritual directors who collect these cases is not to establish the objective reality of these phenomena, which is taken for granted, but to show how 'divine mysticism' may be distinguished from diabolical imitations of it. It is, however, only fair to say that the wisest of the Catholic writers on mysticism discourage the tendency to attach great importance to miraculous favours and temptations. These experiences are a subsidiary and not indispensable part of the great mystic quest, which is the journey of the Soul, by an inner ascent, to the presence of God and to immediate union with Him. The stages of this

ascent are mapped out with the same precision as the supernatural visitations above mentioned, and these records of the Soul's progress have a recognised value for psychologists as well as for divines. Although much importance must be allowed to the effects of suggestion in all matters of religious experience, the books of the medieval mystics have great value as first-hand evidence of the normal progress of the inner life when the mind and will are wholly concentrated upon the vision and knowledge of God. The close agreement which we find in these records, written in different countries, in different ages, and even by adherents of different creeds (for Asia has here its own important contribution to make) can only be accounted for if we hold that the mystical experience is a genuine part of human nature, which may be developed, like the arts, by concentrated attention and assiduous labour, and which assumes the same general forms whenever and wherever it is earnestly sought.

There are some students of mysticism who are content to investigate the subject as a branch of psychology. They examine and tabulate the states of mind described in mystical writings, without raising the question what degree of intrinsic value or truth they possess. This is the right attitude for a scientific psychologist to take. But it is not the right attitude for one who wishes to understand the mystics. We cannot understand them as long as we confine ourselves within the limits which psychology, which is an abstract science, is obliged to accept. Mysticism is the pursuit of ultimate, objective truth, or it is nothing. 'What the world calls mysticism,' says Coventry Patmore, 'is the science of ultimates, the science of self-evident reality.' Not for one moment can it rest content with that neutrality or agnosticism with regard to the source and validity of its intuitions, which the psychologist, as such, is pledged to maintain. For psychology is a branch of natural science. It may be denned as the science of behaviour, or as that part of physiology from which the physiologist is self-excluded by his assumption that all vital functions can be explained mechanically. The mystic is not interested in the states of his consciousness. He cares very little whether he is conscious or unconscious, in the body or out of the body. But he is supremely interested in knowing God, and, if possible, in seeing Him face to face. His inner life is not an intensive cultivation of the emotions. It develops by means of what the later Greek

philosophy calls 'the dialectic,' which Plotinus defines as 'the method and discipline which brings with it the power of pronouncing with final truth upon the nature and relation of things, also the knowledge of the Good and of its opposite, of the eternal and of the temporal.' This knowledge gained, the dialectic, now freed from all deceit and falsehood, 'pastures the Soul in the meadows of truth'; it has a clear vision of the eternal Ideas, and points the way to the supreme Unity that lies behind them. Then at last, and not before, it rests, leaving behind the operation of the discursive reason and contemplating the One who is also the Good.

I am well aware that this philosophy runs counter to a very strong current in contemporary thought. It is possible to write a book on the philosophy of religion, as Höffding has done, in which the three parts are epistemology, psychology, and ethics, that is to say, the science of knowledge, the science of mental states, and the science of conduct, without touching on the question which to the Platonist seemed the necessary starting-point and the necessary goal of the whole inquiry—the question, 'What is ultimate reality?' But when I observe what this popular relativism has made of religion and philosophy; when I see that it has helped to break down the barriers which divide fact from fancy, knowledge from superstition, I am confirmed in my conviction that when the philosophy of religion forsakes 'its old loving nurse the Platonic philosophy' (to quote one of the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century), it is in danger of tailing from its high estate, and playing into the hands of those who are willing to exploit the superstitions of the vulgar. Pragmatism is defenceless against obscurantism; the 'Gospel for human needs' rehabilitates those half-suppressed thought-habits which are older and more tenacious than civilisation.

Thus it soon became clear to me that mysticism involves a philosophy and at bottom is a philosophy. Although it never leaves the pathway of individual and concrete experience, it values that experience precisely as being not merely subjective, not merely individual, but a revelation of universal and eternal truth. And while the intelligence itself is continually enriched and strengthened by the experiences which come to it, so that it changes progressively in correspondence with the growth of its knowledge, it is never

a passive spectator of the energies of the will and the raptures of the emotions, but on the contrary is ever active, co-ordinating, sifting, and testing the whole content of experience, and maintaining a mental discipline not less arduous and not less fruitful than the moral discipline which accompanies it.

Mysticism is a spiritual philosophy which demands the concurrent activity of thought, will, and feeling. It assumes from the outset that these three elements of our personality, which in real life are never sundered from each other, point towards the same goal, and if rightly used will conduct us thither. Further, it holds that only by the consecration of these three faculties in the service of the same quest can a man become effectively what he is potentially, a partaker of the Divine nature and a denizen of the spiritual world. There is no special organ for the reception of Divine or spiritual truth, which is simply the knowledge of the world as it really is. Some are better endowed with spiritual gifts than others, and are called to ascend greater heights; but the power which leads us up the pathway to reality and blessedness is, as Plotinus says, one which all possess, though few use it.

This power is emphatically not a mere susceptibility to passionate or rapturous emotion. Mysticism has indeed been defined as 'an extension of the mind to God by means of the longing of love'; and there is nothing to quarrel with in this definition. But it is 'the *Spirit* in love' of Plotinus, the *amor intellectualis Dei* of Spinoza, which draws us upward. It is the whole personality, unified and harmonised under the leadership of what the Stoics called the ruling faculty, that enters the holy of holies. There are some admirers of the mystics who speak as if the intellect were an intruder and almost an obstacle in the life of holiness. Against such I will be content to quote the words of one of our foremost theologians, the Roman Catholic layman, Baron Friedrich von Hügel. 'It is impossible to see why, simply because of their superior intellectual gifts and development, men like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, Cassian and Duns Scotus, Nicholas of Gones and Pascal, Rosmini and Newman, should count as necessarily less near to God and Christ, than others with fewer of these gifts and opportunities. For it is not as though such gifts were considered as ever of themselves constituting any moral or spiritual worth. Nothing can be more certain than that great

mental powers can be accompanied by emptiness or depravity of heart. The identical standard is to be applied to these as to all other gifts: they are not to be considered as substitutes, but only as additional material and means for the moral and spiritual life; and it is only inasmuch as they are actually so used, that they can effectively help on sanctity itself. It is only contended here that such gifts do furnish additional means and materials for the devoted will- and grace-moved soul, towards the richest and deepest spiritual life. For the intellectual virtues are no mere empty name: candour, moral courage, intellectual honesty, scrupulous accuracy, chivalrous fairness, endless docility to facts, disinterested collaboration, unconquerable hopefulness and perseverance, manly renunciation of popularity and easy honours, love of bracing labour and strengthening solitude; these and many other cognate qualities bear upon them the impress of God and His Christ. And yet they all find but a scanty field of development outside the intellectual life.' The same writer makes, as it seems to me, a most acute comment on the influence which Realism and Nominalism have respectively exercised upon the intellectual factor in religion. 'Whereas,' he says, 'during the prevalence of Realism, affective, mystical religion is the concomitant and double of intellectual religion, during the later prevalence of Nominalism, Mysticism becomes the ever-increasing supplement, and at last evermore largely the substitute, for the methods of reasoning.' In other words, it is the alliance of mysticism with that great school of thought which can be traced back to Plato, which saves it from *Schwärmerei* and the vagaries of unchecked emotionalism. The 'contemplation' of the Platonic mystic is only what St. Paul means when he says, 'I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding also.'

Such being the truth about the mystical element in religion, as I was led by my studies to believe, I was naturally brought to pay special attention to the great thinker who must be, for all time, the classical representative of mystical philosophy. No other mystical thinker even approaches Plotinus in power and insight and profound spiritual penetration. I have steeped myself in his writings ever since, and I have tried not only to understand them, as one might try to understand any other intellectual system, but to take them, as he assuredly wished his readers to take them, as a guide to right living and right

thinking. There is no Greek philosopher who did not intend to be an ethical teacher; and in Plotinus the fusion of religion, ethics, and metaphysics is almost complete. He must be studied as a spiritual director, a prophet and not only a thinker. His is one of the most ambitious of all philosophical systems, for he not only attempts to unite and reconcile what was best in all Greek philosophy, but he claims to have found the way of deliverance and salvation for the soul of man, in whatever circumstances he may be placed. And, as he is never tired of telling us, we can only understand him by following him, and making his experience our own. The quest is for him who will undergo the discipline and follow the gleam. Spiritual things, as St. Paul says, are spiritually discerned; the carnal mind, however quick in apprehending the appearances of the world of sense, cannot know the things of the Spirit. We can only judge of what is akin to ourselves. He says: 'As it is not for those to speak of the beauties of the material world who have never seen them or known them—men born blind, for instance, so must those be silent about the beauty of noble conduct and knowledge, who have never cared for such things; nor may those tell of the splendour of virtue who have never known the face of justice and temperance, beautiful beyond the beauty of the morning and evening star.' There is much in philosophy (so Plato himself felt) that cannot be explained in words. In his Seventh Epistle, which I think, with Professor Burnet, we may accept as genuine, he declares his intention of publishing nothing on what he must have regarded as the crown of his philosophy, the Idea of the Good. 'There is no writing of mine on this subject, nor ever shall be. It is not capable of expression like other branches of study; but as the result of long intercourse and a common life spent upon the thing, a light is suddenly kindled as from a leaping spark, and when it has reached the Soul, it thenceforward finds nutriment for itself. I know this at any rate, that if these things were to be written down or stated at all, they would be better stated by myself than by others, and I know too that I should be the person to suffer most by their being badly set down in writing. If I thought that they could be adequately written down and stated to the world, what finer occupation could I have had in life than to write what would be of great service to mankind, and to reveal Nature in the light of day to all men? But I do not even think the effort to attain this a good thing for man, except for the very

few who can be enabled to discover these things themselves by means of a brief indication. The rest it would either fill with contempt in a manner by no means pleasing, or with a lofty and vain presumption as though they had learnt something grand.' So in the *Timaeus* he says, 'To find the Father and Maker of this universe is a hard task; and when you have found him, it is impossible to speak of him before all people.' We find exactly the same feeling in Clement, who is important as illustrating the methods of teaching philosophy at Alexandria in the generation before Plotinus. 'To write down everything in a book,' he says in the *Stromateis*, 'is as bad as putting a sword into the hand of a child.' 'The safest thing is not to write at all, but to learn and teach orally; for what is written remains.' The *disciplina arcani* of the Christian Platonists probably consisted in an allegorical and philosophical interpretation of certain historical dogmas; but there was also the perfectly legitimate feeling that spiritual teaching is for the spiritually minded; and this is the motive of such reticence as we find in Plotinus. Plotinus himself learnt the duty of reticence from Ammonius; and we must remember this principle in dealing with any mystical philosopher. Even St. Paul had seen in a vision things 'unlawful to utter'; and Samuel Johnson blames Jacob Böhme for not following the apostle's example in refraining from attempts to utter the unutterable. Nevertheless I do not think that Plotinus has suppressed anything except the indescribable. The *Enneads* are notes of conferences held with the inner circle of his disciples.

My study of Plotinus has therefore been, by necessity, a moral as well as an intellectual discipline. And I have not found that he fails his disciples in good fortune or in evil. Like Wordsworth, he is an author whom a man may take up in trouble and perplexity, with the certainty of finding strength and consolation. He dwells in a region where the provoking of all men and the strife of tongues cannot annoy us; his citadel is impregnable even when the slings and arrows of fortune are discharged against ourselves or our country. For he insists that spiritual goods alone are real; he demonetises the world's currency as completely as the Gospels themselves. The good life is always within our power; and 'if a man seeks from the good life anything beyond itself, it is not the good life that he is seeking.' It is a severe utterance; but there is what Emerson calls a 'tart cathartic virtue' in it, which is bracing

when we are battling through a storm. I have found him, I say, a wise and inspiring spiritual guide; and if I have also found his philosophy intellectually satisfying, it is partly because a religious philosophy must satisfy religious needs as well as speculative difficulties. The two cannot really be separated, unless we try to divide our minds into water-tight compartments, which is unnecessary, since we are in no danger of being torpedoed in this voyage.

It is a satisfaction to me to know that in thus confessing myself to be a disciple and not merely a student and critic of the philosopher whose system I have undertaken to expound, I am in harmony with the intentions of the founder of this lectureship, as expressed in the deed of foundation. He wished his lecturers to study the nature of the supreme Reality, within which we live and move and have our being. He wished them to consider the duty and destiny of man, determined by his relations with the powers above him. And he desired that the knowledge to which these studies may lead us shall be a knowledge that is our own, not depending on any external special revelation, nor enjoined by any sacrosanct authority. To such knowledge Plotinus promises to conduct us, and his last word to us is, 'Remember that there are parts of what it most concerns you to know which I cannot describe to you; you must come with me and see for yourselves. The vision is for him who will see it.'

The great constructive effort of Neoplatonism, in which the speculations of seven hundred years are summed up, and after which the longest period of unimpeded thinking which the human race has yet been permitted to enjoy soon reached its end, is of very great importance in the history both of philosophy and of theology. Historically, this is what Platonism came to be; this is the point at which it reached its full growth—its *τέλος* or *φύσις*, as Aristotle would say, and then stopped. The Neoplatonic philosophy underwent no further development of importance after Plotinus, but it absorbed into itself most of the rival theories which had flourished alongside of it, so that it seemed to later students to have unified Plato and Aristotle, and the Stoics to boot. But its later history, from an earlier date than the closing of the Athenian schools of philosophy by Justinian in 529, must be sought not among the crumbling ruins of Hellenism, but within the Christian

Church. If it be true, as Eunapius said, that 'the fire still burns on the altars of Plotinus,' it is because Christian theology became Neoplatonic. This involved no violent changes. From the time when the new religion crossed over into Europe and broke the first mould into which it had flowed, that of apocalyptic Messianism, its affinity with Platonism was incontestable. St. Paul's doctrines of Christ as the Power and the Wisdom of God; of the temporal things that are seen and the eternal things that are invisible; his theory of the resurrection, from which flesh and blood are excluded, since gross matter 'cannot inherit the Kingdom of God'; and his psychology of body, soul, and spirit, in which, as in the Platonists, Soul holds the middle place, and Spirit is nearly identical with the Platonic *Noûç*—all show that Christianity no sooner became a European religion than it discovered its natural affinity with Platonism. The remarkable verse in 2 Corinthians, 'We all with unveiled face reflecting like mirrors the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory,' is pure Neoplatonism. The Fourth Gospel develops this Pauline Platonism, and the Prologue to the Gospel expounds it in outline. One of the Pagan Platonists said that this Prologue ought to be written in letters of gold. The Christian writers of the three generations after the Johannine books are, on the intellectual side, less interesting; but from the beginning of the third century we have an avowed school of Christian Platonism at Alexandria, which lives for us in the writings of that charming man of letters, Clement, and in the voluminous works of Origen, the most learned Biblical scholar of his time. After this, Greek Christianity remained predominantly Neoplatonic; Gregory of Nyssa and Basil are full of echoes of Plotinus and his school. With Augustine Latin theology follows the same path. Plotinus, read in a Latin translation, was the schoolmaster who brought Augustine to Christ. There is therefore nothing startling in the considered opinion of Rudolf Eucken, that Plotinus has influenced Christian theology more than any other thinker (since St. Paul, he should no doubt have added). From the time of Augustine to the present day, Neoplatonism has always been at home in the Christian Church. The thoughts of Plotinus were revived and popularised in Boëthius, long a favourite author with medieval students; his spirit lives again in Scotus Erigena and Eckhart; and the philosophy of Proclus (or perhaps rather of Damascius, the contemporary of the writer) was

invested with semi-apostolic authority when the treatises of the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, which seem to have been written under his influence, were ascribed to St. Paul's Athenian convert. The Arabs included some Neoplatonic treatises in their Aristotelian collection, and through them another rivulet from the same source came back into European philosophy, and influenced the theology of the schoolmen. It is impossible that a union thus early formed and so frequently cemented can ever be dissolved. Platonism is part of the vital Christian theology, with which no other philosophy, I venture to say, can work without friction. It is gratifying to me to find that Troeltsch, one of the deepest thinkers in Germany, has said that the future of Christian philosophy depends on the renewal of its alliance with Neoplatonism.

If this is so, the neglect with which the Enneads have been treated is not a little surprising. In most of our Universities where Greek philosophy is studied (I can speak at any rate for Oxford and Cambridge), it has been almost assumed that nothing later than the Stoics and Epicureans is worthy of attention. Some histories of ancient philosophy end earlier still. The result is that a very serious gap seems to yawn between Hellenic and Christian philosophy, a gap which does not really exist. There were quarrels between Christian and Pagan philosophers, but they were based mainly on violent prejudices with which intellectual differences had not much to do; for neither in philosophy nor in ethics were the differences very great. It is therefore regrettable that students of Greek philosophy should think it natural to ignore Christian thought, and that students of Christian dogma should often have no intimate knowledge of Greek philosophy. An example of this limitation is furnished by a very famous book, Harnack's *History of Dogma*. Professor Harnack is one of the most learned men in Europe, and his survey of the whole field of Christian speculation and dogmatic controversy is admitted to be masterly; but he has little or no sympathy with Greek philosophy, and does not seem to be very well acquainted with it. Neither his article on Neoplatonism in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* nor his chapter on the subject in the first volume of the *History of Dogma* seems to me worthy of its author. He regards the Hellenic element in Christianity with unmistakable impatience and irritation; it is for him, one may almost say, an unwelcome intruder.

Other German theologians, who belong without qualification to the Ritschlian school (which cannot be said of Harnack himself) show this animus with no disguise; and the Catholic Modernists, in spite of their quarrel with Liberal Protestantism, see in the Christian Platonists only the spiritual fathers of their *bête noire*. St. Thomas Aquinas. We have thus to face a revolt against Platonism both in Protestant and Catholic theology. Those who sympathise with this anti-Hellenic movement are not likely to welcome my exhortations to read Plotinus. But if they would do so, they would understand better the real continuity between the old culture and the new religion, and they might realise the utter impossibility of excising Platonism from Christianity without tearing Christianity to pieces. The Galilean Gospel, as it proceeded from the lips of Christ, was doubtless unaffected by Greek philosophy; it was essentially the consummation of the Jewish prophetic religion. But the Catholic Church from its very beginning was formed by a confluence of Jewish and Hellenic religious ideas, and it would not be wholly untrue to say that in religion as in other things *Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit*. Catholicism, as Troeltsch says, is the last creative achievement of classical culture. The civilisation of the Empire, on its moral and religious side, expired in giving birth to the Catholic Church, just as on the political side the Caesars of the West handed over their sceptre, not so much to the Holy Roman Emperors as to the priestly Caesar on the Vatican.

I regret that the scope of these lectures cannot be enlarged so as to include a survey of the development of Christian Platonism. Valuable books on the subject already exist; but none of them, so far as I know, treats this school of Christian thought as a continuation, under changed conditions, of the latest phase of Greek philosophy. The assumption is that the Christian religion may be traced from the Old Testament Scriptures, through the canonical books of the New Testament, and so to the Councils of the Catholic Church. This is like tracing a pedigree from one parent only, for the Hellenic element in the New Testament is usually almost ignored.

To the student of historical evolution, whether in the political sphere or in the growth of ideas, the great interest of this period is the reciprocal influence of East upon West, and of West upon East. The classical civilisation was driven

in self-defence to import certain alien elements which properly belong to the East, and which are exotic to that type of culture which was developed on the shores of the Mediterranean. The ancient system of self-governing city states, with their vivid social and intellectual life, and their devotion to art, science, and letters, was too weak to withstand the menace of northern barbarism. The empire of Augustus became inevitable from the time when the Republic was driven to suspend constitutional forms and empower Gaius Marius to raise a professional army. The fate of liberty was sealed when, after a century of military revolutions and pronunciamientos, the Empire was centralised and turned into a Sultanate by Diocletian. The establishment of a State Church, from which it was penal to dissent, followed as a necessary part of this Orientalising of Europe. The change was easier because the free Mediterranean races had long been declining in numbers and energy. But neither absolutism nor Cæsaro-papism belongs to the natural evolution of European civilisation. It was no accident that as soon as political conditions permitted the rise of free cities in Italy and elsewhere, the study of classical culture began again where it had been dropped a thousand years before. From that time to this our civilisation has been inspired by Græco-Roman ideas, kept alive by the fragments of the old literature which fortunately survived through the Dark Ages. The continuity of thought has been less broken than that of political and religious institutions. Catholic theology has stood firmly by its ancient philosophical tradition, and has kept it alive and active. As long as St. Thomas Aquinas is the norm of scientific orthodoxy, the philosophy of the Church must remain predominantly Neoplatonic.

The neglect of Plotinus himself, in spite of the immense influence of his teaching, is partly accounted for by the reluctance of ecclesiastics to acknowledge obligations to a Pagan, who was the master of that formidable anti-Christian apologist, Porphyry. But it is partly due to the extreme difficulty of reading the *Enneads* in the original. The obscurities of his style baffle at first even a good Greek scholar, and the arrangement is chaotic. We have in fact only isolated conferences in the *Seminär* of Plotinus, in which some particular difficulty is discussed. Hence endless repetition, and often the impression of keen young students heckling their professor. In one place (5. 5. 6) 'you have said' is allowed to stand. When after much labour the student

has become familiar with the mannerisms of the author, he has his reward. The sustained elevation of thought; the intense honesty of the man, who never shirks a difficulty or writes an insincere word; the deep seriousness which makes him disdain all ornament and fine writing, but frequently moves him to real eloquence by the grandeur of his intellectual visions; the beauty of holiness which pervades even the abstruse parts of the dialectic, produce a profound impression on those who have given themselves time to surmount the initial difficulties of reading the Enneads. But these difficulties are certainly formidable, and they have in fact deterred many who would have found the labour well repaid. It has not hitherto been possible to read Plotinus in a really good translation. There is a Latin version by Marsilio Ficino, the well-known Renaissance Scholar (1492). The enthusiastic English Platonist, Thomas Taylor, published partial translations between 1787 and 1834. The volume, which was first issued in 1817, has been edited by Mr. G. R. S. Mead in Bohn's Series. It is very useful to the English reader, but is incomplete and not immaculate in scholarship. Bouillet's French translation (1857) has long been out of print. It contains the whole of the Enneads, with valuable notes, introductions, and appendices. As a translation it has the merit of being always lucid and readable, and the demerit of being often inaccurate. Müller (1878) has translated the whole with great care into very crabbed German. In 1905 another German, Otto Kiefer, published a translation of selected portions, which I have not seen, but which Drews praises for its style. But in the near future it will be possible for any English student to make the acquaintance of Plotinus in an excellent English version. This we shall owe to the devoted labour of Mr. Stephen Mackenna, who is translating the whole into admirably clear and vigorous English. The most convenient Greek text is that of Volkman, in the Teubner Series, 1883–4. He and other editors have done something to clear the text of corruptions, but several passages are mutilated beyond repair.

The literature of Neoplatonism is extensive. Three works in French—those of Matter (1817), Jules Simon (1845), and Vacherot (1846)—are still worth studying, though in some important points I have found them unsatisfactory, especially in their disposition to find un-Hellenic elements in Plotinus. They are all excellently written. A more recent French work, Chaignet's *Histoire de*

la Psychologie des Grecs (1887), in five volumes, seems to me very sound but not very brilliant. The fourth volume is devoted to Plotinus. There is a large number of German monographs. I have consulted, with varying degrees of profit, those of Steinhart (1840), Kirchner (1854), and Richter (1867), as well as the well-known work of Zeller, whose citations I have found more valuable than his interpretation of them. The pages of Ueberweg-Heinze and of the *Real-Encyclopädie* which deal with the subject are useful. Hartmann's comments on Plotinus are good; and his disciple, Arthur Drews, has published a book called *Plotin* (1907), which contains valuable criticism, though he is too anxious to find Hartmann's 'Unconscious' in Neoplatonism. Essays in German and French on the influence of Plotinus upon Augustine and Basil have also been consulted. Rudolf Eucken has a fairly long discussion of Plotinus in his *Lebensanschauungen Grosser Denker*, which marks an advance on earlier criticisms of the philosophy. Eucken fully recognises the great importance of Plotinus in the history of thought, and especially of Christian thought; but he has not escaped the common error of finding metaphysical dualism in Plotinus, and he has not understood the doctrines of the One and of Spirit in relation to each other. The account of Neoplatonism in Windelband's *History of Philosophy* is short but very acute, and he traces with great ability the influence of Plotinus upon Christian philosophy. Of English works, by far the best is Mr. Whittaker's volume, *The Neoplatonists* (1901), an admirable survey of the subject. An independent contribution to an understanding of our author is the chapter on 'The Spiritualism of Plotinus' in Mr. Benn's *Greek Philosophers*. Mr. Benn is not afraid to claim that in some respects Plotinus shows a real advance upon the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. But this writer declares roundly that 'the speculations of Plotinus are worthless,' an *ex cathedra* pronouncement which no philosopher should have the hardihood to utter. Dr. Bigg's little volume on Neoplatonism (1895) is marked by the liberality, penetration, and humour which distinguish all his writings. Writing as a Christian theologian, he is a little inclined to treat the Pagan philosophers *de haut en bas*; but for all that, his account of the Neoplatonists is one of the best in English.

Of other English books on the subject I am unable to speak with the same satisfaction. Max Müller notices Plotinus in his lectures on Psychological

Religion; but he has been at so little pains to verify the information which he has gathered from other books, that he prints *in extenso*, with a few Greek words in brackets, a purely fictitious 'letter from Plotinus to his friend Flaccus,' remarking that a man's real opinions may sometimes be discovered more accurately from his correspondence than from his published works. The letter is a cento of Plotinian phrases, compiled, without any intent to deceive, by R. A. Vaughan, in his *Hours with the Mystics*. Vaughan has not made it quite clear that the document is his own composition, and I have found four later writers caught in the trap thus inadvertently laid for them. This incident throws some light on the carelessness which critics have shown in dealing with the subject of these lectures. An American, Mr. Fuller, has published an essay on *The Problem of Evil in Plotinus*. The subject is not happily chosen, for Plotinus makes no attempt to hide his embarrassment in dealing with this insoluble problem, and throws out several suggestions which have no appearance of finality.

I wish that I could speak with a more whole-hearted appreciation of Dr. Edward Caird's chapters on our subject in the Gifford Lectures, entitled *Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, delivered at Glasgow in 1900–02. The book as a whole is as instructive as it is delightful, and it is no light matter to differ from one of the master-minds of his generation. But I must take my courage in both hands, and say that he seems to me to have attempted to stretch Plotinus on his Hegelian bed of Procrustes, and to have grievously distorted him in the process. When I read that the method of Plotinus 'involves a negation of the finite or determinate in all its forms'; that he makes unity the 'direct object of thought'; that for him 'religion ceases to be the consecration of life'; that 'the world of pure intelligence is opposed in the sharpest way to the world of spatial externality and temporal change'; that he 'develops to its extremist form the dualism of form and matter'; that he escorts us to a region in which 'all that concerns the individual life is left out'; that in the ascent 'spirit divests itself of one element of its life after another,' I cannot resist the conclusion that Dr. Caird has in some important respects entirely misinterpreted the doctrine of the great Neo-platonist. I shall have to return to all the points raised by his criticisms, in the course of my lectures. Here it will suffice to say that Dr. Caird takes no notice of the doctrine of *ἐνέργεια*,

the creative activity of the higher principles, which is an essential part of this philosophy; that in criticising Plotinus he assumes that because in the material world no movement can take place without loss of energy on the part of the mover, the same law must hold in the spiritual world; and finally, that he virtually ignores the *κόσμος νοητός*, the world of Spirit, which for Plotinus is the sphere of ultimate existence, and speaks as if the universe of Plotinus consisted of the supra-real One and the infra-real Matter, thus reducing to absurdity a system which assuredly deserves a different treatment. I do not mean to imply that Dr. Caird's treatment of Plotinus is throughout hostile and unsympathetic; that is far from being the case. Many of his strong points are generously acknowledged. But it is taken as proved that the philosophy is vitiated by certain fundamental errors which must prevent it from possessing much more than a historical interest. The errors and inconsistencies which Dr. Caird finds in him are of a kind which could not have escaped the notice of Plotinus himself, who was no lonely thinker, but lived in an atmosphere of free criticism, which he always encouraged. And in fact there is not one of the objections which cannot be either answered out of the *Enneads*, or proved to rest on a misunderstanding of their teaching.

I will conclude this introductory lecture by quoting a few laudatory estimates of Plotinus as a philosopher, by writers whose names carry weight. I will omit the eulogies of later members of his own school, with whom loyalty was a point of honour, and honorific epithets a matter of custom. While other Platonic teachers were deemed to have deserved the name of 'divine,' the superlative 'most divine' (*θειότατος*) was reserved for Plotinus. Augustine, who, as Grandgeorge has proved, shows acquaintance with each of the six *Enneads*, and quotes Plotinus by name five times, speaks of him in the following terms. 'The utterance of Plato, the most pure and bright in all philosophy, scattering the clouds of error, has shone forth most of all in Plotinus, the Platonic philosopher who has been deemed so like his master that one might think them contemporaries, if the length of time between them did not compel us to say that in Plotinus Plato lived again.' The precise form of laudation is not happy; but the words leave no doubt that Augustine, at this early period of his career, was an enthusiastic admirer of Plotinus. In his later writings, Augustine speaks of the 'very acute and able men' who

formed the school of Plotinus at Rome; regrets that some of them were led astray by curious arts (the theosophy and theurgy into which the Pagan revival betrayed the Neoplatonists in the fourth century), and thinks that if Plotinus and his friends had lived a little later, they would have 'changed a few words and phrases and become Christians, as many of the Platonists in our generation have done.' In the *De Civitate Dei* he explains how little they would have had to change, though he criticises one or two of their doctrines sharply enough.

Of modern critics, Réville considers Plotinus 'one of the most vigorous thinkers that humanity has produced.' Vacherot calls the *Enneads* '*la synthèse la plus vaste, la plus riche, la plus forte peut-être qui ait paru dans l'histoire de la philosophie.*' Harnack thinks that his main influence was in the 'creation of an ethical and religious mood, the highest and purest ever attained in antiquity.' Whittaker calls him 'the greatest individual thinker between Aristotle and Descartes'; Drews, 'the greatest metaphysician of antiquity.' Benn, whose almost contemptuous estimate of the system has been quoted, admits that 'no other thinker has ever accomplished a revolution so immediate, so comprehensive, and of such prolonged duration.' Eucken speaks of the '*Weltbeherrschenden Geist des Plotin.*' The words of Troeltsch, already referred to, are: 'In my opinion the sharper stress of the scientific and philosophical spirit in modern times has made the blend of Neoplatonism and New Testament Christianity the only possible solution of the problem at the present day, and I do not doubt that this synthesis of Neoplatonism and Christianity will once more be dominant in modern thought.'

Encouraged by these opinions, I shall endeavour to put before you the teaching of this great man, in the hope that you will find it, as I have done, full of intellectual light and practical guidance. Nor am I without hope that, as we study him together, we shall find in him a message of calm and confidence for the troublous time through which we are passing. It is not worse than the period in which Plotinus himself lived. And yet he was able to breathe freely in the timeless and changeless world which is the background of the stage on which each generation struts for its brief hour and then is gone. He lives among the eternal Ideas; he never refers to the chaos which surrounded his

peaceful lecture-room. It is not callousness or indifference that makes him avert his eyes from the misfortunes of the Empire; he knows that the earth is full of darkness and cruel habitations; but he is convinced that evil is not the truth of things; he cannot regard it as having a substance of its own. 'Evil,' he says, 'is not alone. By virtue of the nature of Good, the power of Good, it is not Evil only. It appears necessarily, bound around with bonds of Beauty, like some captive bound in fetters of gold; and beneath these it is hidden so that, while it must exist, it may not be seen by the gods, and that men need not always have evil before their eyes, but that when it comes before them they may still be not destitute of images of the Good and Beautiful for their remembrance.' In another place he says, in words as true as they are consoling, 'Wickedness is always human, being mixed with something contrary to itself.' It is human, and therefore not wholly evil and not wholly incurable; for the Soul of man comes from God, and cannot be utterly cut off from Him. And above the Soul of man is the great Soul, the Soul of the world. This, for Plotinus, as for Eastern thinkers down to Rabindranath Tagore, is no mere metaphor but a truth. The world has, or is, a Soul, which, as the Wisdom of Solomon says, sweetly ordereth all things. If our ears were attuned to the Divine voices we should, in the words of the great living poet and prophet of India, 'hear the music of the great I AM pealing from the grand organ of creation through its countless reeds in endless harmony.' The Soul of man is bidden to take its part in the great hymn of praise which the world sings to its Creator. The body and its organs are the lyre on which the Soul discourses its music. We must take care of our lyre while we can; but when the lyre is broken or worn out, then, says Plotinus, 'we must sing without accompaniment.' No losses or misfortunes, whether public or private, can hurt the hidden man of the heart, our real self; still less can they impair the welfare of the universal life in which our little lives are included. The real or spiritual world is a kingdom of values; and all that has value in the sight of the Creator is safe for evermore. 'Nothing that has real existence can ever perish.' If Plotinus sometimes seems to speak a little heartlessly of such calamities as have lately befallen some unhappy communities of men and women, it is because his philosophy will not permit him to doubt for a moment that a noble life cannot possibly be extinguished by death, that the cause of justice

and righteousness cannot possibly suffer final defeat, and that no earth-born cloud can long prevent the beams which stream from the eternal fount of light from illuminating the dark places of this lower world. He bids us, as his master Plato had done, to 'flee hence to our dear country.' But this flight is no shirking of our duties; it is, as he puts it, 'a being made like to God'; and this we can achieve without any running away; for the spiritual world is all about and within us; 'there is not much between us and it.' And when we have, in heart and mind, reached our dear country, all earthly troubles fade into insignificance. So it may be that others besides myself will find in this prophet of a sad time a helper in public and private sorrows, and that they will say of Plotinus what he said of his master Ammonius, 'This is the man I was looking for.'

The Third Century

PLOTINUS is the one great genius in an age singularly barren of greatness. The third century is a dull and dark period, which has been avoided by historians for its poverty of material and lack of interest. It was a depressing age even to those who lived in it. When the death of Marcus Aurelius on the banks of the Save or Danube closed a long series of good emperors, even those who had ridiculed the imperial saint were saddened; all men had a misgiving that a troublous time was coming. Aurelius himself had been oppressed by the gathering gloom; he exhorts himself to courage and resignation, not to hopefulness. In the generations which followed, pessimism was prevalent. Cyprian, in rebutting the charge that the Christians are the cause why plague, famine, and drought ravage the world, says, 'You must know that the world has grown old, and does not remain in its former vigour. It bears witness to its own decline. The rainfall and the sun's warmth are both diminishing; the metals are nearly exhausted; the husbandman is failing in the fields, the sailor on the seas, the soldier in camp, honesty in the market, justice in the courts, concord in friendships, skill in the arts, discipline in morals. This is the sentence passed upon the world, that everything which had a beginning should perish, that things which have reached maturity should grow old, the strong weak, the great small, and that after weakness and shrinkage should come dissolution.' Tertullian finds in the state of the world ample corroboration of the sombre apocalyptic dreams in which he loves to indulge. This is indeed, he exclaims, the *fin de siècle* (*ipsa clausula saeculi*), which threatens horrible misfortunes to the whole world. Pagan literature is equally pessimistic. Dion, Lampridius, and Censorinus all lament the progressive decay of the world, which to Julian, in the fourth century, seemed to be 'at its last gasp.' It would no doubt be possible to find parallels to those lugubrious vaticinations in the most flourishing periods of Greek and Roman culture. The idea that the world is deteriorating was very commonly held in antiquity, though the opposite belief in progress also finds frequent expression. But such a chorus of woe as rises from the literature of the third century had not been heard before.

It has been customary to blame both Christianity and Neoplatonism for encouraging and justifying this pessimistic temper. Pagan apologists were not slow to ascribe the decay of civilisation to the 'third race,' the adherents of the new faith. Modern historians too, lamenting the wreck of the ancient culture and the destruction of its treasures in the stormy night of the Dark Ages, have felt a thrill of sympathy with the melancholy prophecy of a certain Antoninus, son of Eustathius, that soon 'a fabulous and formless darkness shall tyrannise over the fairest things on the earth.' And as for Neoplatonism, was not Plotinus a mystic, and does not the mystic's soul dwell in a house with 'rich windows that exclude the light, and passages that lead to nothing'? Did he not notoriously regard this world only as a good place to escape from?

As regards Christianity, subsequent history has shown the absurdity of attributing the world-weariness of any age or people to its influence. Christian idealism has taken many forms, but it would be difficult to name any period when it has quenched men's hopes or paralysed their energies. The true account of the matter is that the mysterious despondency which brooded over the Roman world at this epoch, attacked the new religion and infected it with a poison from which it was slow to recover. The Christian Church was no contributory cause of the disease. And if the *tædium vitæ* of the third century nearly swamped the buoyant ship of Christianity, it will be necessary for us to examine closely the other-worldliness of Plotinus, in order to disengage if possible the accidental from the essential in his obvious neglect of social life and its problems. Our object is to understand his philosophy, which, as I hope to show, has a permanent value far greater than is usually supposed. With this aim before us, we shall desire to give full weight to the conditions under which the *Enneads* were written, and in estimating the value of their moral teaching to consider rather the logical implications of the author's system than the want of emphasis on social and civic duties which we may observe in the work itself. This caution is the more necessary, because Plotinus follows what was really a literary convention of his age in avoiding any references to contemporary problems. There is nothing in the *Enneads* to indicate that their author was a subject of Decius and the Gordians; he might be writing in and for a timeless world. We may excuse him, for the age was not favourable to the study of political philosophy. The time was not yet ripe

for St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, which was written when the death-throes of the first Latin Empire were heralding the yet wider sway of the second, the crowned and sceptred ghost of Caesarism which Hobbes beheld sitting amid the ruins of its ancient power.

It would no doubt be possible to discuss the philosophy of Plotinus as a thing independent of the date and locality in which it appeared. Mysticism, above all other types of human thought, is nearly the same always and everywhere. Plotinus would perhaps have preferred that his work should be so dealt with. But there is much in Neoplatonism besides the mystical element, much that can only be understood when it is replaced in its historical setting. And if we are to treat Plotinus as the last of the great Greek philosophers, as indeed he was, we must try to picture to ourselves the strange and uncongenial influences with which Hellenism had to contend in the third century, and take account of the inevitable modifications which Platonism underwent in such an atmosphere. A thinker may be in advance of his contemporaries, but not of his age. The great man gives voice to the deepest thought of his own epoch.

The salient features of this period—the fusion of religious cults, the inroads of Orientalism, the growth of superstition, the reverential deference to antiquity, the profound but half unconscious modification of the older pagan ethics, and the intense individualism of the contemplative life are all phenomena which have their explanation in the uprooting of nationalities which resulted from the Roman state-policy, and still more from the Roman slave-system. The racial factor had a decisive influence in the religious movements under the empire, and helped largely to bring about the defeat of those traditions and aspirations with which Neoplatonism, after the death of Plotinus, more and more allied itself.

A very few words will suffice to indicate the nature of the imperial government. When Septimius Severus lay dying at York in 211, he flattered himself that he was leaving in profound tranquillity an empire which he had found torn with dissensions of every kind. He was the last emperor for eighty years who died in his bed. His sons, whose 'concord' and 'brotherly love' were celebrated on coins and commemorated in an annual festival, agreed no better than Cain and Abel. Caracalla was assassinated after a reign

of six years; Macrinus, his murderer and successor, fourteen months later. The next emperor was a young Syrian priest, who for four years exhibited in his own person the worst aberrations of unclean nature-worship. Next the army appointed a boy named Alexander, who called himself Severus and reigned for thirteen years, devoting his time to the practice of a vague eclectic religiosity, in which Apollonius and Jesus, Orpheus and Abraham, divided the honours of his chapel. When he too was murdered by the soldiers, a period of anarchy set in. There were seven emperors in fourteen years (235–249). It was during this chaos that Plotinus arrived at Rome (in 244). Then came Decius and a futile conservative reaction, which as usual took the form of a persecution of the Christians. His death in battle with the Goths—no emperor had before fallen under the enemy's sword in Roman territory—ushered in another period of wild confusion, during which, an emperor died the captive of the Persian king. One able ruler, Aurelian, appeared, and was soon murdered. His reign witnessed a bloody pitched battle in Rome itself. The Illyrian emperors, of whom the last and greatest was Diocletian, restored order by bringing to an end the lawless rule of the army, and accepting in principle the Sultanate towards which all indications had been pointing since the time of the Antonines.

A vigorous nation can survive a long period of revolutions and bad government, conditions to which the ancient world was only too well accustomed. But the two great races of antiquity were no longer vigorous. The system of city-states is a forcing-house of genius, but terribly wasteful of the best elements in the population. From the fifth century B.C. onwards, war, massacre, and banishment steadily eliminated the most virile members of the Greek cities. Originally a very prolific race, as is proved by the extent of its colonisation, the Hellenic stock dwindled rapidly. The Spartiates became almost extinct. Polybius speaks of Greece generally as an empty country, and by the time of Plutarch large tracts of land were absolutely deserted. The decline was in quality as well as quantity; by the time of Cicero the Greeks had already ceased to be a handsome people. Complete racial exhaustion had practically destroyed the Hellenes before the period which we are considering.

The same blight began to attack Italy in the second century before Christ. The ravages of the Social War and the proscriptions only aggravated a disease which would have run its course without them, and which even peace and good government could not cure. Marcus Aurelius settled large bands of Marcomanni in Italy, a proceeding which would be inconceivable if tracts of good land had not been lying fallow. In the fourth century not only the country but the towns were almost deserted. Bologna, Modena, Piacenza, and many other cities in Northern Italy were largely in ruins. Samnium remained the desert which Sulla had left it; Apulia contained only sheep-walks and a few farm-slaves. Rome itself seems to have shrunk by more than one-half between Augustus and Septimius Severus. This decline, which was not caused by want, but mainly by a deficiency of births, received a sudden acceleration from the great plagues of the second and third centuries. In a healthy society the losses due to pestilence, like those due to war, are quickly made good by a spontaneous rise in the birthrate; but in the Roman empire the loss was probably permanent.

The exceptions to the universal depopulation are found, not in the Romanised provinces of Gaul and Spain, which seem to have dwindled, though less rapidly than Greece and Italy, but in the Semitic East. The Romans themselves spoke with wonder of the fertility of African and Egyptian women; but Egypt was very full under the Ptolemys, and the high birth-rate was probably balanced by a high death-rate. The regions where the numbers increased were, it seems, those inhabited by Jews and other Semites, and those colonised by Germans. The steady influx from these fertile races seemed at times to have stopped the decline, so that Tertullian and Aristides speak in exaggerated language of the great abundance of population. The multiplication of the Jews, in spite of frequent massacres, is one of the problems of history. Germans penetrated everywhere, and were not kept down by massacre; they probably formed a large proportion of the serfs who were beginning to take the place of rural slaves in many parts. The army was chiefly composed of them: the fact that the minimum height for the infantry was fixed, in 367, at 5 feet 7 inches, and 5 feet 10 inches for crack regiments, shows that recruits were no longer expected or desired from the Mediterranean races.

The general result of these changes was that in the third century the traditions and civilisation of Greece and Rome were guarded almost entirely by a population of alien origin. One curious difference was that while the old Romans were almost vegetarians, and temperate wine-drinkers, the new Romans lived by preference on beef, and swilled great quantities of beer. In more important matters there was a great change from the second to the third century. Till the period of the Antonines ancient morality shows an unbroken continuity, and in certain respects differed widely from our own. The most remarkable instance is the toleration extended throughout antiquity to the love of boys, which was practised openly and with hardly any sense of degradation in most parts of the Græco-Roman world. This vice was not imported from the East, but spread to the Persian empire from Greece. It appeared later than the Homeric Age, 'quite recently,' according to Plato, and fell into complete discredit only after Christian and Northern ethical ideas made themselves felt. Not to linger over a disagreeable subject, I will only call attention to the contrast between the pious thanksgiving of Marcus Aurelius, that he 'touched neither *Benedicta* nor *Theodotus*,' making no difference between mistress and minion, and the angry disgust of Plotinus, when a paper justifying this practice was read in his presence. In some respects the change was for the worse. The barbarisation of the empire is shown by the increasing brutality of the criminal law. Torture became the commonest mode of examining witnesses, even free men. The 'avenging flames,' a penalty almost unknown to pagan antiquity, became the prescribed punishment for every offence which the government found inconvenient or difficult to stop. The advent of the Dark Ages was deferred only by the amazing cast-iron despotism of Diocletian and his successors, which saved the empire from a welter of savagery at the cost of establishing a bureaucratic caste-system which bound every man to his father's calling, and gradually sucked the life-blood of the people by insatiable and unscientific taxation. Throughout the storms of invasion, revolution and civil war, the large landowners somehow maintained their colossal fortunes. The *latifundia* rivalled in extent the largest *haciendas* and *estancias* in Mexico and the Argentine Republic. The six magnates who in Nero's time owned half the province of Africa must have had millions of acres apiece. These vast estates were very carelessly farmed,

and as the depopulation advanced land became almost valueless. An astonishing decree of Pertinax (A.D. 193), which applied to Italy as well as the provinces, allowed anyone to 'squat' on uncultivated land, whether in private ownership or belonging to the *fiscus*, and to acquire complete proprietary rights on condition of farming it. The senatorial class, forbidden to govern, to trade, and finally even to fight, were condemned to a life of useless dilettantism. They read and wrote, or looked after their property in an easy-going fashion. The main part of their capital consisted of slaves, whose labours supplied all the needs of the great house, and who could be let out to various employers; and of flocks and herds, which roamed over the vast sheep-runs in charge of slave herdsmen and shepherds. New fortunes were acquired chiefly by inheritance from wealthy bachelors, by usurious money-lending, or by the pickings of office, which for an unscrupulous official might be very large. The small proprietors were easily bought out, and the luckless middle-class were the chief victims of the *fiscus*.

The decay of culture in the third century is even more deplorable than the disappearance of the old races. The barbarians brought new blood into the empire, but literature, art, and science, which were born with the Greeks, died with them. After the death of Hadrian, 'a Sahara of the higher intellect spreads its dreary wastes over the empire.' Under the enlightened rule of the Antonines law and grammar alone seem to flourish. Suetonius is an entertaining gossip who in an affected age has the sense to attempt no style at all. Aulus Gellius, the epitomator, is a typical product of an age of timid pedants. With him ends classical Latin. The historian of Latin literature now turns his eyes to Africa, where the accomplished rhetorician Fronto is attempting to regenerate the language by reviving the prose of the second century B.C., and to the 'barbarous jewellery' of the decadent Apuleius, the Huysmans of the ancient world, in whom the *elocutio novella*, that strange mixture of pre-classical Latinity and medieval sentiment, reaches its highest excellence. The swan-song of Latin poetry is the *Pervigilium Veneris*, with its singularly pathetic close, in which the Muse bids her tearful farewell to the language of Ennius, Lucretius, and Virgil.

*'Illa cantat; nos tacemus; quando ver venit meum?
Quando fiam uti chelidon, ut tacere desinam?'*

There was no second spring for Latin poetry, though Ausonius and Claudian were to make the first renaissance not undistinguished. In the third century the chief writers in Latin are Christians, some of them, like Tertullian and Cyprian, followers of the African tradition, others, like the feebler Minucius Felix and Lactantius, would-be Ciceronians. Tertullian, in spite of his unquestionable power, is a sinister figure, with his gloomy ferocity and scorn of the old civilisation. After reading him we can understand, what sometimes seems hard to account for, the extreme unpopularity of Christianity at a time when the moral condition of the Church was only a little below its best. Cyprian was an able administrator, with a comparatively chastened style. Commodian, though hardly a poet, had the courage to write as he talked, in a Latin which is beginning to pass into the language of medieval Italy. The great lawyers remain; and we must not forget that 'the first half of the third century is the golden age of Roman law.' The names of Ulpian and Papinian do honour to their time, and their work marks a real progress in justice and humanity, before the barbarism of the later empire set in.

The list of Greek writers is far longer and more respectable than of Latin. A revival of Hellenism had been one of the most prominent facts of the second century. The victory of Vespasian with his Syrian legions over his western rival was perhaps an early indication that the centre of gravity was soon to pass eastwards, though the roll of eminent Spaniards closes only with Trajan. Plutarch, Dion Chrysostom, Herodes Atticus, Maximus of Tyre, Arrian, and Lucian, are among the chief names of a real though rather superficial Greek revival. It bears all the features of a revival, in its artificiality, its conscientious imitativeness and reliance on authority, and in its short duration. But the achievement of Athenæus, Dion Cassius, and Pausanias, followed by Herodian, Longinus, and Philostratus, is by no means contemptible, and Christianity now contributes its share to literature in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Methodius. In spite of political disturbances, a cultivated society existed in the capital. It included *littérateurs* of all kinds, poets or poetasters, rhetoricians, grammarians, critics, philosophers. There were also numerous

portrait-painters, and architects and engineers capable of undertaking large works. The art was imitative, but of a fair quality till the middle of the century, when the coins begin to show a strange deterioration. The bas-reliefs in the arch of Septimius Severus are vigorously executed. But, speaking generally, there was stagnation or retrogression everywhere, except in law, religion, and religious philosophy.

The Religious Revival

The revival of the religious sentiment, which Augustus had desired in vain to see and had laboured in vain to encourage, was now a swiftly rising flood. Lucian's Voltairean impiety was a belated product even under the Antonines; he would have been impossible half a century later. The causes are obscure. Chief among them was probably the consciousness of spiritual sickness and alienation from God, which made men and women feel the 'need of a physician.' As Kirchner says, 'the rich fullness of the world of appearance had lost its charm; men now cared only for the pure universal and the pure individual.' The movement took many forms, There was a sheer conservative reaction, which looked back to the gods of Olympus. There was a turning towards a religion of pure inwardness; there was also a growth of theosophy and magic. Above all, the religion of the Hellenistic period found its characteristic expression in the cult-brotherhood (*θίασος*). The oracles, too, were no longer dumb. Communion with God in some form or other was desired by all. A very prominent feature in the religion of this period was the deliberate mixture of cults originally quite distinct. It was taught that the gods of different nations are all manifestations of the same Divine principle. In many cases the confusion of races, each with its own religious traditions, made interdenominationalism not only easy but necessary, as we observe in some parts of the United States in our own day. Toleration and fusion were the result, all the more readily because most of the old cults, in their traditional forms, were by no means adequate to the higher religious and moral needs of the age.

It is not easy in this period to separate the religious syncretism from the philosophic, for philosophy had now become the intellectual expression of personal religion. But it will be most convenient to consider the philosophical genesis of Neoplatonism in a separate chapter, and to give here a brief sketch of the religious condition of the empire.

The Roman pantheon was densely populated before the immigration of Oriental deities began. 'There are more gods than human beings,' as Pliny the Elder and Petronius assure us in the first century. But the Roman gods were invertebrate creatures, shadowy abstractions which had not enough flesh and blood to make a mythology. No one ascribed any definite personality to Domiduca, Volupia, or Pertunda. But the feast-days, which were as numerous as the *festas* of Catholicism, gave abundant opportunities for little pious functions, with prayer and sacrifice, followed by a meal on the sacred flesh. Rome was full of dignified ecclesiastics, with ancient titles, and revenues sufficient to allow of frequent and sumptuous banquets. The numerous benefit-clubs and trade-unions had a religious basis, and the members attended a periodical 'church-parade' in honour of the deity who was the special protector of their calling. Private and domestic piety flourished in well-ordered households, and the time-honoured religious ceremonies no doubt filled an important place in the country life which Pater describes in *Marius the Epicurean*. This piety was prompted by very different feelings from those which dictated conformity with the established and official cult of the reigning emperor, who could make it more dangerous to swear falsely by his genius than by all the other gods in the pantheon. There was nothing revolting either to Greeks or Asiatics (except Jews) in paying Divine honours to a man. The apotheosis of the ruler of the civilised world was a matter of course. Vespasian no doubt had been conscious of the comic side of his approaching deification (*vae! puto deus fio*); and Caracalla, after murdering his brother Geta, could jest upon the promotion which he had secured for him. This complimentary worship of dead Cæsars was so little serious or so little religious that the Christians must have seemed to their contemporaries merely obstinate or unpatriotic for objecting to it. But recalcitrance was always dangerous, and the living emperor was now beginning to collect the insignia of a real theocratic ruler. Diocletian compelled those who had

interviews with him to prostrate themselves as before a god. Long before this, each divinised emperor and imperial family had their own association of worshippers, and membership of these guilds added interest and a sense of importance to the life of a middle-class citizen. Paganism, like Catholicism, knew how to make religion pleasant and interesting.

Strictly, it was not the emperor, but his genius or guardian-angel, who must be propitiated and by no means blasphemed. Every man had a 'genius,' every woman a 'Juno.' This piece of old Roman folk-lore was now so much mixed up with speculation about disembodied souls and spirits that the fuller consideration of it must be postponed to a later chapter. Apuleius is a valuable source of information on the spiritualistic beliefs which were now becoming almost universal. Christianity was not unaffected by them, but it did a great service by discountenancing magic and theurgy. The school of Plotinus was less successful in resisting the popular craving: it was at last deeply infected by this kind of superstition, which Plotinus himself disliked but could not wholly repudiate, since nature, for him, was a web of mysterious sympathies and affinities. The 'genius' was properly a man's higher self, his spiritual *ego*. It is therefore significant, as showing how fluid was the conception of personality at this time, that families, cities, trades, had their 'genius,' much as the individual soul might be held to be subsumed under a higher unit, and ultimately under the universal Soul. This vagueness about personality made the notion of a celestial hierarchy easy and acceptable. Maximus of Tyre is fond of regarding the spirits as messengers and interpreters between earth and heaven, and Celsus, the Roman official, compares them to proconsuls or satraps, deputy regents of the supreme ruler. Plotinus himself believed in these intermediate beings, and so did the Christians, for whom the 'dæmons' of paganism became demons in our sense.

In an age when the Semitic element in the population was gaining every year on the Mediterranean stocks, the East, always the cradle of religions, was certain to have a great influence both on belief and worship. Rome was almost equalled in population, wealth, and culture by Alexandria and Antioch, and a considerable fraction even of the Roman population came from Syria and Egypt. In the army the Eastern gods were the most popular objects of

worship; inscriptions in their honour are found in the military stations of England, Germany, and North Africa. The Eastern religions brought with them their priests, not state-officials like the higher Roman ecclesiastics, who might hold many secular posts in combination with their *sacerdotium*, but a dedicated caste with no other interests except the service of their god, and a recognised obligation to proselytise. These priests ranged from the often saintly servants of Mithra or Isis to the disreputable charlatans who perambulated the country-side with an image, a donkey, and a band, and collected coppers from the gaping crowd.

The four countries from which the most important Oriental religions came were Egypt, Syria, Phrygia, and Palestine. We will consider them in turn.

The Egyptian Religion

At Rome, the cult of Isis was the most important among the foreign religions. Even in the first century her worship was widespread in Italy, as is testified by numerous inscriptions at Pompeii. For Minucius Felix the Egyptian gods are already 'Roman.' At first looked down upon, the Egyptian goddess had become fashionable long before the arrival of Plotinus at Rome. Commodus, while emperor, took part with shaven head in her ceremonies, and carried the image of Anubis. Caracalla showed special favour to the Egyptian rites, and built splendid temples to Isis at Rome. The eclectic Alexander Severus was as learned in the theology of Egypt as in that of other countries.

As the goddess of fertility, Isis combined some of the attributes of Venus, Ceres, and other Roman deities; she was also in a special degree the protectress of commerce and navigation. Sailors and women were equally devoted to the goddess who brought ships safe into port, and children into the world. But she was also the vision of the initiated mystic. The *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, full of foulness as it is, leads up to a passionate prayer of devotion to her, as she reveals herself to her pious votaries.

In earlier times the shrines of Isis had an equivocal reputation. The goddess was popular with the demimonde, and her worship can have had little

connection with moral purity. But such scandals are not recorded in the third century, when indeed they would have hardly have been tolerated. In our period the worship of Isis was organised in a manner very like that of the Catholic Church. There was a kind of pope, with priests, monks, singers, and acolytes. The images of the Madonna were covered with true or false jewels, and her toilette was dutifully attended to every day. Daily matins and evensong were said in the chief temples. The priests were tonsured and wore white linen vestments. There were two great annual festivals, in the spring and autumn. The autumn festival was the occasion of public grief and joy over the death and resurrection of Osiris-Sarapis. The processions and ceremonies described by Apuleius and others were ingeniously contrived to excite curiosity, stimulate devotional feeling, and gratify the æsthetic sense. For the mystic, Isis represented the deepest mysteries of life. Proclus makes her say, 'I am that which has been, is, and will be. My garment none has lifted.'

The worship of Isis was closely connected with that of the dog-headed Anubis, long popular in Egypt; of Harpocrates the son of Isis and Osiris, and above all of Sarapis, who more and more took the place of the old Egyptian god, Osiris. Sarapis was a deity of many attributes; he had a great reputation for miraculous cures, and invalids often slept in his temples. He ended as a solar deity of omnipotent majesty, and as the great god of Alexandria threw Isis somewhat into the shade. Caracalla paid him the compliment of dedicating to him the sword with which he had killed his brother Geta, as South-Italian assassins have been known to offer to the Virgin the knife which they have used successfully on a private enemy.

Isis was a suffering and merciful mother-goddess, who longed to ease human troubles. Her worship had a miraculous element for the vulgar, a spiritual theology for the cultured, and an attractive ritual for the average worshipper. No other religion practised faith-healing, by passing the night in temples (*ἐγκοίμησις*), on so large a scale. This Egyptian religion never inculcated a very robust or elevated morality. Its power lay in its charm, and in the hope of immortality which was always strong in the Egyptian religion. 'There is a famous passage in an ancient Egyptian text relating to the worship of Osiris,

which speaks of the loyal votary of the god after death. "As truly as Osiris lives, shall he live; as truly as Osiris is not dead, shall he not die; as truly as Osiris is not annihilated, shall he not be annihilated." The initiate is to share eternally in the divine life; nay, he does already share it. He becomes Osiris.'

Phrygian Cults

The worship of the *Magna Mater* had been known and recognised in Attica as early as the fourth century B.C., and at Rome as early as the second Punic war, and was patronised by the aristocracy, though no Roman was allowed to enrol himself among the eunuch priests of the Asiatic goddess. King Attalus at this time presented the senate with the black aerolite, formerly kept at Pessinus and then at Pergamum, which was supposed to be the abode of the Idæan Mother. The grateful Romans, at last rid of Hannibal, erected a temple to her on the Palatine, and ordained an annual holy week in her honour. The Phrygian religion was wild and violent, as befitted a climate which produces extremes of heat and cold. It included such primitive elements as the worship of stones and trees, and at once horrified and fascinated the West by its wild orgies at the spring festival, which culminated in the self-mutilation of devotees. But it had also an ascetic order of mendicant friars, and 'mysteries,' of which little is known. Till the beginning of the empire, the Phrygian worship was kept under strict control, and attracted little notice except on the festival days when the foreign priests marched in procession through the streets. But Claudius, according to a second-century authority, removed the restrictions on the worship of Cybele and Attis, and Roman citizens began to be chosen as *archigalli*. Henceforth the Phrygian worship received a measure of official support not extended to other Oriental religions. The festal processions were very imposing, and the death and resurrection of Attis was regarded as a sacrament and pledge of human immortality. The worshippers sang, 'Take courage, ye initiated, because the god is saved: to you also will come salvation from your troubles.'

Cumont thinks that in the worship of Sabazius, the Phrygian Jupiter or Dionysus, closely connected with Cybele, some Jewish influence may be

traced. The religion of the *Magna Mater* was certainly changed by partial fusion with the Persian cult, of which more will be said presently. The baptism of blood (*taurobolium*) was, according to some, introduced into the Mithraic worship from the cult of the Great Mother; though it is perhaps more probable that it belonged originally to the cult of Anahita, a Persian goddess. In the sacred feasts of Attis we can trace the familiar change from an *agape* to a sacrament in which the flesh and blood of the god were consumed. In the fourth century this plastic cult even tried for a *rapprochement* with Christianity. Augustine tells that priests of Cybele (or Mithra) used to say, *Et ipse pileatus Christianus est*, 'even the god with the cap (Attis or Mithra) is a Christian.'

Mithra.

Lucian, in one of his Voltairean Dialogues of the Gods, makes Momus ask contemptuously, 'Who is this Mithra, with the sleeves and tiara, who knows no Greek and cannot even understand when one drinks his health?' But in point of fact Mithra was a parvenu only in the West. He was a very old god of the rising sun, who had been degraded to a subordinate place by the worshippers of Ahuramazda, but who refused to remain in the shade, and advanced rapidly in popular favour among the Persians. The Persian religion was always disliked by the Greeks; the deadly rivalry of the two races is enough to account for this. The West was less prejudiced. And Mithra acquired characteristics which made him as welcome in Europe as in Asia. As god of the sun, he claimed affinity with the nature-deities with whom the Greeks and Romans were familiar, and as patron of life and giver of immortality he appealed strongly to the harassed subjects of the empire. While Isis attracted chiefly women and peaceable citizens, Mithra was the god of soldiers and adventurers. Plutarch says that the Romans first became acquainted with this religion through the Cilician pirates whom Pompey subdued in 67 B.C. For Plutarch, Mithra is still a barbarian god. It was in the time of the Antonines that he gained recognition as a deity of importance at Rome. Marcus Aurelius installed him on the Vatican, where St. Peter's now stands. From this time he became a favourite of the legionaries, who have

scattered votive monuments in his honour over every province where they encamped, and also of the slave-class, for reasons less easy to determine.

The Mithraic symbol is familiar to all frequenters of sculpture museums. The god, in the guise of a young Phrygian wearing the national cap, a short tunic, and a mantle floating in the wind, plunges his dagger into the neck of a bull. The scene is complete only when several other figures are present; two young Phrygians, each holding a lighted torch, the one upright and the other reversed; five symbolic animals—a crow or owl, a scorpion gripping the bull from beneath, a dog lapping the blood, a serpent, and a lion. The sacrifice is represented as taking place in a cave or grotto. The details, however, differ a good deal, and the meaning of the symbols is, perhaps always was, obscure. In some representations the signs of the Zodiac are introduced. This is part of the process by which Mithra, now identified with Shamash, the Chaldean sun-god, became *sol invictus*. The worship passed direct from the Parthian and Persian empires to Italy, for the Greeks never worshipped the god of their old enemies, the Persians. In the West its progress was rapid, especially after Commodus was initiated into its mysteries.

All through the third century its influence increased, till in 307 Diocletian, Licinius, and Galerius dedicated a sanctuary at Carnuntum on the Danube to Mithra, 'the protector of their empire.' In order to understand this phenomenon, we must remember two things—first, the great prestige of the revived Persian empire in the third century; and secondly, the dualism of the Persian religion, which introduced a new and, to many minds, an attractive explanation of the evil in the world. Plato, towards the end of his life, was supposed to have dallied with the idea of an evil world-soul; Plutarch adopted it more decidedly. But Hellenism knew of no anti-gods, such as were a prominent feature in Mazdeism, and disliked the whole type. Ahriman is identified with Satan by Theodore of Mopsuestia, and the attributes of the two are almost the same. Neoplatonism made room for maleficent agents, but not so easily as Christianity. Porphyry gives us a demonology which he says that he took from 'certain Platonists,' but which looks like pure Mazdeism. The medieval hell, with its denizens, is a legacy from Persian thought, partly direct, and partly through Judæo-Christian literature. The

obstinate persistence of Mani-cheism in the Middle Ages is another proof of the attractiveness of dualism. The popularity of Mithra-worship in the army is easy to understand on other grounds, for the Persian religion was one of strict discipline and military ethics. It regarded lying as the basest of sins, and loyalty to comrades as the chief of the virtues. Soldiers would also readily understand that the moral life is a state of war against 'ghostly enemies.' It was indeed a fine and manly religion, spurring men to action, guiding them by its discipline, and teaching them to live honourably, cleanly, and often holily. Some writers have even speculated as to what the consequences to civilisation would have been if this cult, instead of Christianity, had become the state-religion of the Roman empire. The answer probably is that it would have become very much what Christianity became in the hands of the same population. The religion of the fourth-century Pagan was nearer to Christianity than to the paganism of the first century. The genuinely Persian element would have decayed in Europe, as the Jewish element in Christianity decayed. But such speculations are of small value. Harnack, who takes a less favourable view of the Persian religion than Cumont, calls it a 'barbaric cult,' and reminds us that it hardly touched the Hellenised (i.e. the most civilised) parts of the empire. It was favoured by the court and popular in the army, but never made much way among either the intellectual class or the free populace.

Nature of the Religious Syncretism

The syncretism of the later Roman empire differed widely from the older polytheism, in that formerly the gods had their several functions and lived together more or less amicably as fellow-citizens of Olympus under the limited sovereignty of Zeus or Jupiter. It differed from the identification of Greek with Roman gods, which was only the recognition of a bilingual religion. But now Sarapis, the Great Mother, and Mithra all claimed to be the supreme deity. We should have expected, from our later experience, to see furious jealousies and bloody persecutions of the weaker religion by the stronger. But nothing of the kind occurred. On the contrary, the temples often stood side by side in the same city, and little or no friction is recorded.

The religious condition of a great city in the third century must have presented a strange spectacle. 'Let us suppose,' says Cumont, 'that in modern Europe the faithful had deserted the Christian churches to worship Allah and Brahma, to follow the precepts of Confucius or Buddha, or to adopt the maxims of the Shinto; let us imagine a great confusion of all the races of the world in which Arabian mullahs, Chinese scholars, Japanese bonzes, Tibetan lamas, and Hindu pundits would be preaching fatalism and predestination, ancestor-worship and devotion to a deified sovereign, pessimism and deliverance through annihilation—a confusion in which all these priests would erect temples of exotic architecture in our cities and celebrate their diverse rites therein. Such a dream would offer a fairly accurate picture of the religious chaos of the ancient world before the reign of Constantino.' In a modern city thus divided, every pulpit would thunder with denunciations of the soul-destroying errors taught in the next street, and the old state church, if there was one, would be most bitter of all. But at Rome the new gods fused easily with the old; no difficulty was felt in identifying a virgin goddess with the Mother of the gods. Isis could be adored as Venus, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, according to the pleasure of the worshipper. Wendland prints at the end of his book an extraordinary statuette of Fortuna Panthea, who is loaded with the characteristic emblems of Fortuna, Isis, Nike, Artemis, Asclepius, and the Dioscuri! The Oriental cults were not quite so complaisant to each other; but even in them there was borrowing, as when the lore of the Chaldæans mingled itself with the Persian religion. Paganism had no horror of heresy. The deity, said Themistius, takes pleasure in the diversity of homage. Paganism had no dogma and no church. It showed a kind of wisdom in tolerating Lucian, who made few disciples, and persecuting the Christians, who made many. There never was *one* pagan religion. The common folk maintained their simple sacred holidays through all changes till the victory of Christianity—and long after; the philosophers turned the myths into allegories and so speculated without restraint. The official religion was really dead, as dead as the republican magistracies, the titles of which were kept up for the sake of old associations. The Romans had no objection to make-believe of this kind, and distinguished men were quite ready to accept dignified priesthoods without believing anything. We must not form our

ideas of paganism from the rhetorical polemic of Christian men of letters. Augustine probably got his list of absurd little Roman gods from Varro, not from his own contemporaries. The real rivals of the Church were the Oriental deities, who are for the most part ignored by the Christian Fathers. The paucity of allusions to Mithra-worship in Christian literature is as strange as the silence of the Pagan authors about Christianity. The Church stood outside the zone of mutual tolerance; for the rest, a cult was only disliked if it seemed to be unmanly, immoral, or anti-social.

Plutarch is for us the chief mouthpiece of the theory that all religions are fundamentally one, under different names and with different practices. For him and Maximus of Tyre 'the gods' are symbolic representations of the attributes of a Deity who is in his inmost nature unknowable. Maximus and Dion Chrysostom are 'modernist' in their views about myth and ritual; Philostratus and Ælian are genuinely superstitious. The Hermetic writings are good examples of the Plutarchian theory. They show, however, that the combination of philosophic monotheism with popular polydaemonism was becoming difficult, though the writers are equally anxious to retain both, as indeed the Neoplatonists were. Syncretism was easier when the gods were regarded as cosmic energies, or when their cults were fused in the popular worship of the sun and stars.

In the third century, and indeed earlier, educated men were no longer ashamed of being superstitious; the one unpardonable thing was to be an atheist. There was no reluctance to believe in miracles. Galen, the great physician, is still a Stoic; but in the third century magic played havoc with medical science. Charlatans of every kind found a ready market for their wares. At the same time, the Stoic faith in an unbroken order of nature was too deeply rooted to be at once abandoned. While in the lower intellectual strata sorcery and magic were allowed to run riot, the more philosophical writers tried to combine belief in a predetermined and inviolable order with the patronage of popular superstition. The most acceptable theory was that what Carlyle called a natural supernaturalism is the law of the universe. Mysterious correspondences, sympathies, and antipathies pervade the whole of nature. There is a divine science which enables men to turn to their

advantage, though not strictly to control, these spiritual agencies, which form a celestial hierarchy of daemons, gods, and the supreme Being, the Author of the whole scheme, in whose mind all discords are harmonised. But the distinction between utilising occult forces and controlling them was too subtle for the popular mind. The daemons became the faithful servants of the magician, and the old oracles, which had been almost abandoned, once more did a lively trade. Artemidorus, at the end of the second century, writes a quasi-scientific and quite serious treatise on the principles of interpreting dreams. Every variety of divination was practised, and few enterprises were attempted without consulting those who knew or could influence the will of the higher powers. Tertullian even speaks of child-sacrifice as still carried on secretly in Africa; 'in the proconsulate of Tiberius' (seemingly lately) several priests had been crucified for this crime.

But of all the superstitions which flourished rankly at this time, astrology was by far the most important. It was spoken of as 'the queen of the sciences,' 'the most precious of all arts,' and was almost universally believed in. The learning of the Chaldæans influenced all the Eastern religions, even that of Egypt, It had taken firm root at Rome as early as the second century before Christ, and gained greatly in authority by the advocacy of Poseidonius, the learned teacher of Cicero, whom Cumont and Wendland have shown to have been one of the most influential thinkers of his time. All through the first century A.D. the folly was growing, not at first among the vulgar so much as in fashionable society, where the makers of horoscopes practised their art for high fees. Their calculations were supposed to be so difficult that an occasional mistake might be confessed without loss of reputation. The immense popularity of this pseudo-science has left its mark upon modern languages. When we speak of jovial, mercurial, or saturnine tempers, or of lunacy, we are using the language of astrology. The curious figures which cover old-fashioned celestial globes, and the names which the constellations still bear, are direct survivals of the same science. It was easy, by the theory of universal sympathies, to give a plausible justification of belief in astrology, and the art was so much connected with religion that scepticism could be represented as impious. It directly favoured fatalism, and so tended to paralyse energy as well to crush the mind under a load of gloomy and absurd

superstitions. It drove men to sorcery and magic, as the only hope of combating the direful influences of the stars. It was in vain that the government, while encouraging astrology, condemned magicians to the cross. The severity of the punishment only emphasised the malignant power which adepts in the black art were supposed to exercise.

We probably realise very inadequately the pernicious effects of astrology and magic in the last age of pagan antiquity. These superstitions were all-pervading, and except for accidentally stimulating interest in the heavenly bodies and, to a less extent, in physics, they did unmitigated harm. Christian apologists might well claim more credit than they have done for the Church, as the liberator of Europe from these two causes of human wretchedness. Astrology no doubt lingered on, though no longer sheltered by religion; and magic survived as 'the black art' in spite of fierce attempts at repression; but Christianity may take at least some of the credit for reducing a permanent nightmare of the spirit to a discredited and slowly dying superstition.

Beliefs about the Future Life

Eschatology is always vague and contradictory. The human mind tries to envisage the 'ought to be'—the not-given complement of our fragmentary and unsatisfying experience—under various forms borrowed from finite existence. There are three types of formulated eschatology, which present these hopes or beliefs under the forms of place, time, and substance respectively. The better world is either not here but elsewhere, or not now but sometime, or it is the reality which lies behind illusory appearance. In the higher religions, and in the faith of educated individuals, two of these, or even all three, are often combined or confused, the whole subject being admittedly so obscure that even manifest contradictions are tolerated. It is impossible to estimate what proportion of the population at the present time really believes in human immortality, or to determine whether there have been great fluctuations in the diffusion and intensity of the belief at different periods. In dealing with an age long past, it is hopeless to attempt an answer to such questions. Inscriptions on tombstones, as we know, are not trustworthy

evidence either for the character of the deceased or for the real beliefs of his surviving relations. And the tone of polite literature is not good evidence for the beliefs of the masses.

So far as we can form any opinion, belief in immortality was less general in the first century than it is among ourselves, and decidedly less general than it became two hundred years later. Those who rejected the doctrine, like Pliny the Elder, sometimes avowed their incredulity with contemptuous frankness. But for the most part the Romans were disposed to believe in some sort of shadowy survival, which justified family meetings at the grave and the customary tributes to the departed spirit. Here it is difficult to distinguish belief in personal survival from the natural desire to be remembered and honoured after death. But the belief in ghosts and apparitions (in spite of Juvenal's emphatic testimony to the contrary) seems to have been almost universal in the second century, except among the 'godless Epicureans.' Plutarch, Dion Cassius, the younger Pliny, and Suetonius all believed in spiritualism; and Neoplatonism, with its doctrine of daemons, did nothing to discourage it. The decay of Aristotelianism removed obstacles to free belief in immortality, for in this school the later teachers had taken up a more distinctly negative position than the earlier.

Religious and philosophical faith in immortality subsisted quite independently of spiritualistic superstition. Orpheus and Pythagoras, the former a purely mythical character, the latter a historical figure embroidered with legend, were regarded as the first teachers of the true doctrine about the Soul. These two traditions blended almost completely into one, and in the third century it was the Neopythagoreans, with their spiritual kinsfolk, the Neoplatonists, who practised and preached the 'Orphic' religion. The main doctrines of Orphism were the probation of the Soul in this life as a preparation for eternity, the need of purification and sacramental initiation as the condition of a blessed immortality, and the rebirth of Souls in higher or lower forms, determined by the merits or demerits of the subject in its previous state of existence. The philosophical side of Neopythagoreanism will be discussed in a later lecture; its religious aspect is our present concern. It was conservative and eclectic, uniting a devout reverence for traditions and beliefs hallowed by

antiquity with a genuine zeal for moral reform and spirituality. It taught that the Soul is linked to the Divine by a chain of spiritual agencies, which form a ladder of ascent for it. We are undergoing a probation here on earth; and our salvation consists in liberating the Soul from contamination by the gross vesture of decay which now surrounds it, and in allowing it to emerge into the pure air of the spiritual world. The destiny of the Soul is determined in accordance with the most rigorous retributive justice. We choose our company and consort with our likes. Death is only the transit to that environment which we have made our own. The higher part of the Soul is by nature indestructible; but its immortality may be an immortality of degradation, or of blessedness. Such a theory of retribution, which resembles the Karma-doctrine of Oriental religions, could dispense with any clear pictures of the future state, when the Soul shall have finally escaped from the 'grievous circle' of births and deaths. Speculation about the condition of beatified spirits was discouraged. According to Philostratus, the spirit of Apollonius of Tyana, the idealised prophet and saint of the school, appeared in a dream to a doubter and said to him, 'Thou shalt know all when thou art dead; why dost thou enquire about these things when thou art still among the living?' Imaginative pictures of future bliss and torment were for the most part lightly sketched and, unlike the lurid creations of medieval Catholicism, they were, by the educated at least, not taken literally. For it was the Soul only which was represented as in paradise, purgatory, or hell, and a disembodied spirit cannot be susceptible to physical delights or torments. Immortality was an axiomatic truth; if we are in any degree sharers in the Divine nature, a fact which is proved by our capacity of holding spiritual communion with the Deity, there must be a divine and imperishable element in the human Soul. On the other hand, the survival or resuscitation of the earthly self was neither to be expected nor desired. The category of personality, in the modern sense, hardly existed for ancient thought. Few troubled themselves with the problem how the self could persist in a totally different environment. 'Thou shalt be a god (i.e. an immortal) instead of a mortal,' was enough. Nevertheless there were many who pictured beatified spirits as enjoying themselves in a rather gross fashion; 'the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast' was no Christian invention. Even Plato

jested upon the 'everlasting drunkenness' (*μέθη αἰώνιος*) of the Orphic heaven. These notions are entirely absent from Plotinus and his school. In fact, Neoplatonism is open to the charge of considering the tastes of the philosopher and the saint rather too exclusively in its scheme of salvation. The popular teaching was at once more attractive and more terrifying.

The doctrines of the evolution of Souls, and their reincarnations, do not agree well with the belief in rewards and punishments in a supra-terrestrial world. But attempts to combine incompatible theories are characteristic of all eschatology. Another favourite notion was that the spirits of the just live the life of the blessed daemons, who people the intermediate spaces between heaven and earth, and may aid the living in their earthly difficulties and trials.

The Oriental religions which were now gaining ground everywhere owed a great part of their attractiveness to their definite teaching about a future life. If Judaism ceased to make numerous proselytes in the third century, the cause may be not only the persecution and unpopularity to which the Jews were exposed, but the absence of 'other-worldliness' from their religion. The popular cults, those of Isis, Sarapis, and Mithra, resembled Christianity in incorporating with their moral teaching symbolical mysteries representing a dying and resuscitated God, whose victory over death contained a promise of human deliverance from the power of the grave. The old classical legends of Heracles, of Alcestis, of Persephone, of Ariadne, were now invested with allegorical significance, like the more obviously eschatological myths of Adonis and Osiris. Whatever myths were made the medium of the teaching, the aim and the method were similar—namely, to stimulate faith in atonement, forgiveness, and eternal salvation by means of symbol and sacrament. The dramatic representation of the Soul's deliverance by divine interposition was the central act of religious worship. Curiosity was also excited by throwing a veil of mystery over all the higher teaching. It was held that 'mysterious concealment gives dignity to the divine' (*ἡ κρύψις ἡ μυστικὴ σμνοποιῖ τὸ θίον*). Philosophers made genuine efforts to prevent their theories from being made public, and sometimes exacted a promise of secrecy from all who attended their lectures. We find traces of this esotericism even in the Christian school of Alexandria.

The old mysteries, such as the Eleusinian, naturally profited by this new tendency. These strange institutions combined ritual tradition and mystical theology, the realism of a legendary divine drama and philosophical idealism, the religion of the senses and that of the heart. They were the embodiment of the whole syncretistic movement, in which nearly all who felt religious needs could find what they wanted. They are the great enemies of such Christian apologists as Arnobius, Clement, and Lactantius, just because in them genuine religion sheltered itself under the forms of paganism.

Although the secrets of the mysteries were supposed to be kept as carefully as those of freemasonry, Christian writers like Clement and Arnobius knew something about them, and enough has been gathered from them and other sources, some of them very recently discovered, to give us a general idea of the character of these ceremonies. They contained much that to an unsympathetic observer would seem grotesque and not a little that was really revolting. It is a very primitive idea in religion that union between man and God is sacramentally effected in two ways, by eating the flesh of a god or goddess, and by becoming his or her mate. The former notion rests on the superstition, almost universal among savages, that we acquire the qualities of whatever we eat. Much cannibalism has this origin; and among ourselves many persons still eat large quantities of beef 'to make them strong,' like oxen. In preparing for the mysteries long fasts were enjoined, especially from flesh-food, the idea being that no impure animal spirit should be allowed to enter the body soon to be honoured by the reception of the god. Continence was practised for the same reason, when the sacrament was to take the form of a mystical marriage. This latter mode of union with the Deity was enacted only symbolically in the mysteries, but, as Seeck shows, the symbolism was probably of an unpleasant kind. Besides this ceremonial purity, moral innocence was insisted on at all the more reputable mysteries. At Eleusis the herald issued the invitation to 'whoever has clean hands and sincere tongue.' In other mysteries the call is addressed to him 'who is holy from all guilt and is conscious of no evil in his soul.' This formula is probably Orphic. There is no reason to doubt that the mysteries helped many persons to live pure and dutiful lives. The original myths were not very edifying, especially when they concerned the Olympian gods and goddesses; but a bold use of the allegorical

method could smooth away almost every offence. The device was not wholly unscientific, since myth is often naïve allegory; but the beliefs which the ancient myths may have been invented to signify were very different from the religion of the third century. The old mythology was a heavy weight for the Pagan revival to carry.

Dionysus and Orpheus were two nearly connected forms of the Sun-god, and the worship of both was influenced by the rites of the Thracian Sabazius. The central act of both mysteries was the rending in pieces of the god or hero, the lament for him, his resurrection, and the communion of his flesh and blood as a 'medicine of immortality.' The Egyptian Osiris had also been torn in pieces by his enemies; his resemblance to Dionysus was close enough to tempt many to identify them. In the Egyptian worship the doctrine of human immortality had long been emphasised, and this was now the most welcome article of faith everywhere. It was easy to fuse these national mystery-cults with each other because at bottom they all symbolised the same thing—the hope of mystical death and renewal, the death unto sin and the new birth unto righteousness, based on the analogy of nature's processes of death and rebirth. The aesthetic and orgiastic side of these rites was attractive to a population now largely Oriental by extraction, and too little cultivated to appreciate the idealism which the philosophers offered them. The ritual was much more exciting than anything which Christianity had to offer. We can fancy the emotion of the neophytes when the priest of Isis in his linen vestments drew the curtain and displayed them to the assembled throng, standing with blazing torches in their hands and crowns of palm on their heads, in all the glory of their new initiation. The sacred robes alone must have been an attraction to women. Tertullian tells us how some chose Demeter for her white robes, others Bellona for her dark colours and great black veil, others Saturn for his purple and red. The proceedings were made more impressive by mysterious and half unintelligible verbal formulas, to be learnt by heart and on no account repeated to profane ears; by weird scenes in dark chambers, representations of souls in torment, followed by a sudden blaze of light in which the statue of the goddess, surrounded by attendant deities, was suddenly disclosed; by songs and by dances; by the sacred meal of the

brotherhood; and by solemn processions in which each participant felt the dignity and holiness of his position.

Apollonius of Tyana

The life of Apollonius of Tyana, by the elder Philostratus, is one of the most important documents for the history of religion in the third century. The subject of the biography was a contemporary of Christ, a Pythagorean and a religious reformer. In the early years of the third century the Empress Julia Domna requested Philostratus to write a life of him. The work is a highly apocryphal gospel, in which the hero is almost divinised, Many have thought that there was a deliberate attempt to set up Apollonius as a rival to the Founder of Christianity. But there is no trace of rivalry in the details.

Apollonius is turned into a sort of Pagan Christ because the age craved for a historical object of reverence. The picture is in part noble, but the discourses are very frigid, and there are masses of silly thaumaturgy, which it has been reserved for our contemporary theosophists to treat seriously. The feebleness of the whole production is apparent when we compare it with the canonical Gospels. The chief interest in it is the evidence which it gives of Pagan ideals of saintliness at the time when it was written. Apollonius, we are told, tried everywhere to restore religion to its pristine purity, without attempting to alter any man's manner of worship. He hated bloody sacrifices, and would eat nothing that had lived. He condemned war, holding that we have no right to shed blood in any circumstances. Much stress is laid on the 'science' of prayer and sacrifice. The piety of Apollonius, or rather of Philostratus, is on the whole of the Indian type; the hero is recorded to have travelled through India as far as the Ganges valley.

Judaism in the Third Century

After the edict of Antoninus Pius, which forbade under the severest penalties the circumcision of any Gentile, proselytism must have almost stopped, and it is not unlikely that a good many half-proselytes at this time came over to

Christianity. Judaism until the last revolt under Hadrian had been a strong rival of Christianity; some may even have dreamed that it might become an universal religion. But the savage reprisals which followed this fanatical outbreak drove the Jews back upon themselves, and compelled them to preserve their faith and nationality by returning to the exclusiveness of an earlier period. Philo and Josephus had claimed that Judaism was a 'philosophic' religion—that is, it was compatible with Greek culture. At Antioch and other places large numbers of 'Greeks' had been baptized into Judaism, if not circumcised. But this policy was gradually abandoned in the second and third centuries. It must be remembered that in the first century the profession of Judaism (not of course by a Roman citizen) carried with it certain political and commercial advantages. Even in the third century the Jews were still a privileged class. But the periodical Jew-hunts must have been a formidable set-off against such immunities as they enjoyed, and the Pagan revival greatly increased the unpopularity of a sect who were accused not only of unsociability and want of patriotism but of atheism, from their insulting attitude towards the religion of their neighbours and the absence of any visible objects of adoration in their rites.

Christianity in the Third Century

While Judaism was purging itself from its Hellenistic element and relapsing into an Oriental religion, the bond of union in a people who were determined to remain aliens in Europe, Christianity was developing rapidly into a syncretistic European religion, which deliberately challenged all the other religions of the empire on their own ground and drove them from the field by offering all the best that they offered, as well as much that they could not give. It was indeed more universal in its appeal than any of its rivals. For Neoplatonism, until it degenerated, was the true heir of the Hellenic tradition, and had no essential elements of Semitic origin. Christianity had its roots in Judaism; but its obligation to Greek thought began with St. Paul, and in the third century 'philosophic' Christianity and Platonism were not far apart.

A great change came over the Christian Church between the death of Marcus Aurelius and the middle of the third century. In the second century the Christians had appeared to their neighbours 'a benighted, hole-and-corner tribe' (*tenebrosa et lucifugax natio*). The type to which they seemed to belong—that of a semi-secret society for mutual help, with a mystical religious basis, was familiar enough to their neighbours, but they were looked down upon—so much despised indeed that no trouble was taken to gain accurate information about them. The apologists—Justin and his successors—were contemptuously ignored. Fronto, who in the time of Antoninus Pius wrote the first polemic against Christianity, could set down in all seriousness the old scurrilities about cannibalism and incest which Jewish hatred had circulated. The apologists of this and the next two generations—Theophilus, Tertullian, Clement, Minucius Felix, the writer to Diognetus, are all occupied in defending the Christians against the three charges of immorality, atheism, and misanthropy. The government, till the reign of Decius, was not afraid of the Christians, nor did the educated and official classes feel any special hostility towards them. It was the mob who hated them. This feeling was perhaps strongest among the free or freed lower class, who, imbued with intense conservatism and jealousy, disliked the position which Christianity gave to slaves and women, and the condemnation which it pronounced upon their cruel and immoral amusements. The martyrs before Decius were few in number, and belonged almost exclusively to the *humiliores*, whose lives were held in small account. They were even sacrificed to make the shows in the amphitheatre more popular, as in the case of Perpetua and her companions. There was no systematic effort to destroy the Christians; we never hear of a congregation being netted in a church, though there could have been no difficulty in discovering where they met for public worship. Nevertheless there was no disposition on the part of the government to make Christianity a tolerated religion. From the Pagan point of view, the existence of an 'atheistical' sect, which mocked at the recognised rites, and regarded itself as a spiritual nation within the secular state, was an offence if not a danger. The tests which were employed at the trials of Christians were the simplest tests known to be effective, and were selected as such. The Christians could easily clear themselves of disloyalty; they were always willing to pray for the health

and safety of the emperor; but they objected to offering sacrifice. This accordingly was the test chosen to convict them, though the Jews were not compelled to sacrifice. The Jews were recognised as 'the second race'; the Christians were 'the third race,' and not licensed. This nickname (though Harnack thinks that it may have originated among the Christians themselves) seems to have suggested something unnatural and monstrous—as we might speak of a third sex, and not merely another type by the side of Pagans and Jews. The third race had their own laws and customs; they recognised each other by masonic signs, and 'loved one another at sight.' It was a secret society, and as such odious to a despotic government.

But already in the time of Commodus, according to Eusebius, many noble and wealthy men at Rome became Christians. They were protected no doubt by Marcia, the devout concubine (*φιλόθοος παλλακή*) of the emperor. Tertullian himself was a distinguished lawyer at Rome before he became a Christian. Some of the old family of the Pomponii were converted before the end of the second century. There were many Christians at the court of the tolerant Alexander Severus. By this time Rome was full of churches, and of schismatical chapels for Montanists, Medalists, Marcionites, and Gnostics of different sects. The capital of the empire, in the multitude of its competing places of worship, must have resembled an English or American city. But the Catholics were by far the most powerful of these bodies, since Decius, according to Cyprian, made the surprising statement that he would rather have a rival emperor at Rome than the pope. The extreme hostility of the great church to heretics was noticed as early as Celsus, and exhibited a striking contrast to the brotherly feeling which united the orthodox.

The unpopularity of the Christians among the vulgar was diminishing during the first half of the third century, though the alarm of the official class was now beginning to be excited; after 250 the conditions which, after a fierce struggle, led to the recognition of Christianity as the religion of the State, were already in process of being realised. The Church was approximating to the hierarchical organisation of contemporary society; and it was drawing support from all classes in fairly equal proportion. It had shed most of its Jewish severity. In its sacramental doctrine, its encouragement of relics and

charms, its local cults of saints and martyrs, it met paganism more than half-way. Its annual festivals became more and more like the *festi dies* of the old worship. These accommodations were indeed too facile, inasmuch as many now joined the Church without understanding what Christianity really meant, and fell away at the first threat of persecution. The differences which remained between Christianity and its rivals were nevertheless considerable, and all of them marked the superiority of the new religion. The absence of bloody sacrifices was a pure gain. Apart from the unseemliness of making a piece of common butcher's work the central act in a religious rite, the distribution of the flesh among the worshippers must have been an undignified finale. Far more important was the entire exclusion of the sex-element from Christian worship. The dissociation of religious rites from impurity is to us a matter of course; but most of the other popular religions had at any rate traditions of an undesirable kind. Other advantages which helped to give Christianity the victory were that the Christian Founder was a historical person who had lived comparatively recently; and above all that in its response to the most vital needs of the human heart its superiority was one of kind rather than of degree.

The silence of Plotinus about Christianity certainly cannot be set down to ignorance. While at Alexandria he must have known of the famous Catechetical School, and its distinguished heads. Clement and Origen. The latter of these was one of the most celebrated scholars of his time, whose adherence to Christianity made it henceforth impossible for educated men to sneer at the Church. At Rome the philosopher could not have walked far without passing a Christian church or dissenting chapel, nor mixed in society without encountering Christians. In fact we know that he did meet them. In the middle of his residence at the capital came the persecution under Valerian, which was chiefly directed against converts in the upper class. His friend and patron, Gallienus, restored the churches which Valerian had destroyed, and gave back to the Christians their confiscated property. We may even conjecture that Plotinus advised this act of justice and toleration. His silence, then, is deliberate. He attacks at great length the heretical Gnostics, as bad philosophers. They attended his lectures and unsettled some of his pupils. Their arrogant tone about Plato angered him. Nevertheless he speaks of them

with gentleness, and wishes not to hurt the feelings of those who were Gnostics 'before they became our friends.' As for the Catholics, religion, apart from philosophy, does not come within the scope of the *Enneads*. Plotinus had a good deal in common with the Christian Platonism of Alexandria, and, like Amelius, could have admired the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. But Roman Christianity, already stronger in administration than in thought, had little to attract him; he was probably not aware how far the Gnostics diverged from the orthodox Church; and he was definitely on the side of those who wished to maintain the old culture and the old philosophy. He combated the Gnostics, on grounds which will be more fully explained later; the controversy with Christianity he left to his disciple Porphyry. It is interesting to compare the attack of Porphyry with that of Celsus, about a hundred years before. Celsus is most concerned at the indifference of the Christians to the welfare and security of the empire, in which he perceived a public danger. Porphyry has no political cares. His polemic is thoroughly modern. He has not much quarrel with Christian ethics, nor (except in certain points) with the Christian philosophy of religion. He objects to the doctrine of the creation of the world in time, and its future destruction in time, as separating God from the world. The doctrine of the Incarnation seemed to him a clumsy attempt to reunite what had been falsely dissevered. The resurrection of the body he spurned as an impossible and objectionable doctrine. 'In every other respect,' as Harnack says, 'Porphyry was entirely at one with the Christian philosophy of religion, and was quite conscious of this unity.' Christian thinkers were even anxious to satisfy the Platonists on the points where they differed, with the exception of the Incarnation-doctrine, which they rightly perceived to stand on a different footing from the others, and to constitute a real cleavage between the two creeds. Porphyry on his side was ashamed of the theurgy which Neoplatonism—never quite having the courage of its disbeliefs—had first tolerated and then sheltered. Augustine was ready to seize the advantage thus offered him. 'Porphyry,' he says, 'holds out the prospect of some kind of purgation for the Soul by means of theurgy, though he does so with a certain hesitation and shame, denying that this art can secure for anyone a return to God. Thus you can detect his judgment vacillating between the profession of philosophy and an art which he feels to be both sacrilegious and

presumptuous.' Augustine elsewhere speaks of Porphyry with great respect; and Porphyry pays the most respectful homage to the Founder of Christianity, though not to His followers. This respectful tone was not altogether new; for Numenius is credited with the strange statement that Plato is simply Moses talking in Attic Greek; and 'a certain Platonist,' according to Augustine, used to say that the prologue of St. John ought to be inscribed in golden letters. There were in fact honest attempts at a *rapprochement* from both sides.

The real quarrel between Neoplatonism and Christianity in the third century lay in their different attitudes towards the old culture. In spite of the Hellenising of Christianity which began with the first Christian missions to Europe, the roots of the religion were planted in Semitic soil, and the Church inherited the prejudices of the Jews against European methods of worship. Hellenism was vitally connected with polytheism, and with the sacred art which image-worship fostered. These things were an abomination to the Jews, and therefore to the early Christians. We, however, when we remember later developments, must take our choice between condemning matured Catholicism root and branch, and admitting that the uncompromising attitude of the early Church towards Hellenic polydaemonism was narrow-minded. Porphyry made a very dignified protest against the charge that the Pagans actually worship wood and stone. 'Images and temples of the gods,' he says, 'have been made from all antiquity for the sake of forming reminders to men. Their object is to make those who draw near them think of God thereby, or to enable them, after ceasing from their work, to address their prayers and vows to him. When any person gets an image or picture of a friend, he certainly does not believe that the friend is to be found in the image, or that his members exist inside the different parts of the representation. His idea rather is that the honour which he pays to his friend finds expression in the image. And while the sacrifices offered to the gods do not bring them any honour, they are meant as a testimony to the good-will and gratitude of the worshippers.' The early Christian horror of idolatry was a legacy from the Jews, who were, on the aesthetic side, too unimaginative to understand a mode of worship which for other nations is natural and innocent. Some of the Christians also used insulting language

about the great names of Greek and Roman history. Minucius Felix calls Socrates 'the Athenian buffoon' (*scurra Atticus*); Tatian speaks of 'the wretched Aristotle'; and Cyprian calls the heathen 'dogs and swine.' Nor was the charge of unpatriotic sentiment without some justification. Tertullian, among other protestations of crass individualism, says, '*Nec ulla magis res aliena quam publica.*' Commodian gloats over the ravages which he hopes to see the Germans perpetrate in Italy. The Pagans on their side were both indignant and contemptuous. 'Barbarous' and 'insolent' were their favourite adjectives in speaking of the Christians. If Tertullian and (later) Jerome surpassed them in scurrility, we must remember that Pagan prejudice was not vented in words alone. The Christians would not have hated the empire if they had been treated with common fairness. And so the blame must be divided. We must bitterly deplore that Catholicism took over from paganism what was most barbarous in it—sacerdotal magic—while destroying the masterpieces of sculpture and suffering much of the literature to be lost. But on the other hand, Catholicism extirpated what was worst in paganism—its licentious rites; it greatly diminished the gravest moral scandal of the ancient world; and it quietly conveyed into its hive, and so preserved, the philosophical tradition, in which the succession failed more from the barbarisation of the empire under the devastating inroads of the northern tribes than from the hostility of the Christian emperors. After Porphyry there was more sound philosophy in the Church than in the Pagan schools. Unhappily the time came when priestly tyranny destroyed the philosophy of religion, or drove it, under the reign of scholasticism, into bondage as the *ancilla fidei*. With the modern period, the emancipation of science and philosophy from religion began, and Europe retraced, in the reverse direction, the steps by which the independent science of Ionia developed at last into the Neoplatonic philosophy of faith and devotion. The severance was complete in the materialism and agnosticism of the nineteenth century; there are signs that the tide has now begun to turn again.

Moral Reformation

The ethical reformation under the empire was not less conspicuous than the religious revival. We must of course be on our guard, in studying an age of rhetoricians, against accepting literally either the denunciations of satirists or the edifying language of moralists. There was indeed far too much talk about justice and temperance, and too little practice of those virtues. But we find, from the second century onwards, a general acceptance of the conviction that man is sinful, and needs moral discipline and reformation (*θεραπεία* and *διόρθωσις*). The religious guilds for the most part, though not always, insisted on purity of life as a condition of membership. And in the growth of asceticism we find a new element in morals. Its characteristic Greek form was Cynicism, which was revived as the perfection of Stoicism, and sometimes as a rival to it. The new Cynics were the begging-friars of antiquity. They were recognisable by their long beards and coarse mantles, which sometimes masked idle impostors. The modern clerical profession had its origin in our period; the private chaplain, the sermon, and the pious tract were all familiar to the subjects of the Pagan empire. The Hebraic and Hellenic ideas of morality influenced each other, and in Christianity were combined, without anything like perfect fusion. On the whole, the Hebraic element receded, and the Greek advanced. Clement's ethics are mainly Greek, though he is an orthodox believer. Rather later, the moral teaching of Ambrose is mainly Stoical, that of Augustine mainly Neoplatonic. The moral type, however, was changing. There was less public spirit than formerly, and what there was chiefly took the form of ostentatious civic munificence. The personal rights of the individual were better recognised. The treatment of slaves was less harsh, and Dion Chrysostom has a fine protest against the degradation of young slaves in the service of vice, which had always been regarded as a regular part of the slave-system, in spite of some legislative efforts to check it. The moral influence of Christianity was probably considerable among the adherents of other religions. It tended to make social intercourse more sympathetic, more cheerful (the happiness of the early Christians was one of their most obvious characteristics), and more democratic. Pagan civilisation had no greater fault than its neglect of, and contempt for, women, slaves, and handworkers, that is

to say, for the large majority of the human race. It was aristocratic in a bad sense, and it paid the penalty. The masses allowed culture to perish, partly because they had never been allowed to share it.

Conclusion

Some writers, like Seeck, who perhaps exaggerates the importance of the racial factor in history, and certainly exaggerates the dysgenic effects of racial admixture, have treated the third century as a period of senile decay, without qualification. From the standpoint of art, literature, and science the decay is unquestionable, but not from that of religion or of psychology. Here, on the contrary, there was progress. The groundwork of religious thought was laid; the problems of religious thought were set and answers attempted. The so-called Alexandrian philosophy of religion was a great achievement of still unexhausted richness. Its characteristics have been summed up by Schmidt as 'the union of philosophy and religion, a strong trend towards system and dogma, mistrust of arid intellectualism, consciousness of the need of revelation, aspirations after the spiritual life, thoughts of immortality, inwardness, purity, mysticism.' The three protagonists were Plotinus, Origen, and the successors of Valentinus; representing respectively Greek philosophy, Hellenised Christianity, and Hellenised Orientalism. The common debt to Greece prevented these three parties from being wholly alien to each other, though the fact that they responded to the same needs, and often in a similar manner, brought them into strong rivalry. Greek Christian theology, and the Augustinian theology, were alike the heirs of the first two. In East and West alike the influence of Plotinus on Catholic dogma, and on the whole intellectual life of the Church, has been enormous, and is still operative. The emergence of a philosophy which has had an abiding influence on the religious thought of the whole civilised world is enough to acquit the third century on the charge of complete sterility.

The Forerunners of Plotinus

THE philosophy of the third century is more closely linked to the intellectual tradition of the past than to the social conditions of the time. It is impossible to expound Plotinus without saying something of Plato, and of the vicissitudes of the Platonic school during the six hundred years which divided them. So cursory a treatment of great subjects must seem unsatisfactory, at any rate to a scholar; I must ask such to consider these lectures only as a necessary introduction to the subject of my book.

We have lately been bidden to see in Plato a kind of brilliant digression from the main current of Greek thought. Plato, we are told, was not a representative Greek thinker. The Hellenic spirit is concrete and definite, mundane and unmystical, open-minded and liberty-loving. Plato, on the other hand, is as, Nietzsche says, 'a Christian before Christ.' His view of love is romantic and mystical; he distrusts the natural instincts and scorns the flesh; he is afraid of poetry and the arts; he wishes to 'make life a long study for death'; and finally he is willing to enforce the acceptance of his views by persecution. 'The legislator has only to find out what belief will be to the greatest public advantage, and then use all his efforts to make the whole community utter these words and no others all their lives.' Heretics are to be locked up for five years, with the option between death or submission at the end of them; atheists are to be executed at once.

These characteristics of Plato must certainly be taken into account in any estimate of his work and influence. But the writers whom I have mentioned have, I think, overstated their case. The author of the *Symposium* was surely a Greek to the finger-tips. The famous myths may be unlike anything else in Greek literature; but they would be much stranger in any other. They are quite unlike the bloodless mythologies of the Gnostics. The harsh regimenting of men and women appears no doubt in the *Republic*, but the passage quoted above is from the *Laws*, the work of Plato's old age. There is no lack of fresh air and free talk in the dialogues generally. The qualities which are said to separate him from Hellenism are un-Attic rather than un-Greek. Plato, in fact, was politically a pro-Spartan; just as we can imagine an

Englishman, in despair of the undiscipline and inefficiency of English democracy, praising German institutions, without altering his distaste for some features in the Prussian character. As a natural result of his leaning towards military discipline and iron bureaucracy, he turns his eyes back to the philosophy which seems most in harmony with such a state-organisation—the philosophy of stable equilibrium as taught by the Eleatics. This is not un-Hellenic; it is, so far as it goes, a recognition of an early and very characteristic tendency of Greek philosophy. Above all, it seems to me, those critics go wrong who talk of Plato's 'otherworldliness' as a departure from the genuine Greek view of life. It is true so far as this—that the 'intelligible world,' or spiritual world as I have called it in these lectures—the *κόσμος νοητός*—is in a sense the Hellenic ideal of existence, banished from earth by hard experience and now transported to heaven. But it is not true that Plato abandons the directness and concreteness of Greek thought, and prefers the nebulous region of dreams and hypostatised abstractions. The true account is rather different. When Pater speaks of a 'sensuous love of the unseen' as a characteristic of Platonism, he indicates a rare quality of mind which Plato seems to have possessed in an eminent degree. He saw his generalised Ideas—saw them as the great Greek sculptors saw their ideal types of beauty and copied them in marble from the mental picture. They were for him so clear and concrete that they made the visible world pale and dim by comparison. This again is not un-Hellenic. The world of the Ideas was a very Greek world, in its order, symmetry, beauty, and clear outlines. Only it was not the world which the ordinary man sees clearly and calls the real world. Lastly, those who rebel against Greek ways of thinking generally dislike mathematics, or at least the application of mathematical methods to other sciences. Plato, as is well known, had an exaggerated reverence for geometry, and came to hold (in the *Laws*) that without mathematics 'no one could be a god or a demigod or a hero to mankind.' In this he resembled Leonardo and Spinoza. It is true that much in Plato's ideal state could only be realised, if at all, under conditions resembling those of medieval Catholicism, and quite unlike those of ancient Greece. But Hellenism was itself an ingredient of Catholicism. In short, I feel sure that we cannot separate Plato from his nation, and that we must not suppose that there was any very deep difference between his view of

life and that of Pindar or Sophocles, for instance. It is, as Reitzenstein says, only when two distinct nationalities clash, that profound conflicts in religion and philosophy take place.

The real Plato has been obscured behind Platonism, as the real St. Paul behind Paulinism. Plato was not a mere professor of philosophy, and no 'system' can be found in his writings. He was a poet and prophet; and his true followers are those whom Professor Stewart calls 'personal Platonists.' The true Platonist is he who sees the invisible, and who knows that the visible is its true shadow. The man Plato was of course many things besides a poet of Divine beauty, and he was many things at different periods of his life. In his early works we find a sunny light-heartedness, combined with much reserve; there is little exhortation, sentiment, or emotion. In the *Gorgias* there appears for the first time the Pythagorean influence, and a deep moral seriousness. He has also begun to distrust and dislike the vulgar commercial prosperity which he saw around him, and he despises the democracy, though rather from the standpoint of an old Whig family than from that of an extreme Tory. 'What,' asks his Socrates, 'would be the fate of a physician accused by a confectioner before a jury of children?'

To touch upon the famous doctrine of Ideas in a single paragraph is a rash proceeding; but introductory lectures can hardly escape rashness and its penalties. The doctrine seems to spring from three sources—the gift of abnormally clear spiritual vision above mentioned, which caused Plato to *see* concepts more clearly than material objects; a real confusion caused by the habit of human speech, which clothes abstractions in the same dress as percepts, so that forces, qualities, and relations were treated as things, sometimes even as persons; and the strongly mathematical bent of Plato's mind, a habit which always tempts a thinker to assign constant values to the fluid images of thought and the changing processes of nature. That these tendencies caused Plato to give a handle to his critics is not to be denied; but he has suffered injustice both from his own disciples, who tried to systematise his doctrine without sharing anything of the poetical imagination and the *amor intellectualis* which are its primary sources, and from opponents who are debarred from sympathy with or understanding of Platonism by the same

defects in their own minds. Platonic generalisation, as Pater truly says, is a method, not of obliterating the concrete phenomenon, but of enriching it with the joint perspective, the significance, the expressiveness of all other things beside. It is applied chiefly (in the *Phædrus*, *Phædo*, and *Republic*) to spiritual values, such as the Good and the Just, and to such mathematical universals as equality and similarity. These spiritual values are fully known only when they are perceived to put forth 'organic filaments' everywhere. These values are seen by Plato and all Platonists to be also creative forces.

*'General truths, which are themselves a sort
Of elements and agents, under-powers,
Subordinate helpers of the living mind.'*

Nor must we forget that for Plato exclusion or distinction (*διαίρεσις*) is as essential to the clarifying of thought as combination (*συναγωγή*). To idealise is to essentialise—to eliminate non-characteristic elements. The Platonic Socrates is largely occupied in trying to elicit the exact meaning of ethical terms; vague 'generalities' are just what he desires to hunt and slay. Aristotle is probably right in saying that the quasi-personification of the Ideas as separable (*χωριστά*) from particulars is the doctrine of Plato, not of Socrates. It was the natural way for Plato to think; he does not wish us to picture anything like an extraction of the ideal element from a concrete compound. These transcendental Ideas are the contents of the creative mind of God, the final causes of the world and the inspirers of our thoughts, not the products of our speculation or imagination. They are 'that which really is'—they are reality; whereas sensible objects are only imperfect reproductions of reality. All philosophy is a quest of reality; this is the wisdom, to love which makes a man a philosopher (*φιλόσοφος*). To love the Ideas, then, is virtue and wisdom; and it is in natural beauty that the spiritual world is most clearly revealed to our senses. 'Beauty alone has had this fortune [to reveal the Ideal to sight]; so that it is the clearest, the most certain, and the most lovable of all things.' In the *Sophist* the *dynamic* character of the Ideas is strongly insisted on; whatever truly is, must be active and creative. The argument of this dialogue would almost satisfy modern 'activists'; but the genuine Platonist must feel that the 'vision splendid' of the earlier prose-poems has faded into the light of

common day. The famous *Timaeus*, which had an immense influence on later religious philosophy, teaches that the supreme Deity, the Demiurge, creates a universal World-Soul, through which the universe becomes an organism. The World-Soul bears the image of the Ideas, and the World-Body was fashioned after the same pattern. The Creator desired all to be good, and 'as far as possible' ordered the world accordingly; but 'necessity' impedes the full power of the good. This 'necessity' seems to reside in an intractable material, which was in 'disorderly motion' before the Creator imposed form upon it. It is hard to reconcile this notion with the doctrine that time came into existence with the world-order, and I believe that the whole passage is intended to be myth rather than science. We must remember that for a Platonist a science of the phenomenal, the half-real, is impossible, precisely because Platonism is not dualistic. Plotinus, as we shall see, teaches that there was never a time when the universal Soul was not present in the universe. Plato in this dialogue seems for a moment to dally with the dualistic solution, which has been so unjustly imported into his philosophy as a whole. As soon as the beneficent creative power is personified, there is, no doubt, a danger that the force, whatever it is, which prevents or retards progress in the world of time and space, may also be personified. The evil World-Soul threatens to appear for a moment in the *Laws*. But Plato shrinks from, making the powers of evil too powerful; he is no Manichean. And so man himself must have the seeds of degeneracy within him: the brutes, he suggests, are degenerate men. I think that we may regard as typical the gradual change in Plato's mind in the direction of definite theism. I will even risk the epigram that pantheists generally become theists if they live to be seventy.

The evolution of thought in Plato's mind was a curious foreshowing of what happened at last to his school. Whether we consider the Pythagoreanising tendency, with its devotion to mathematics and astronomy, or the growth of religious interest, of solemnity and devoutness, or the increase in ethical severity, especially as regards sex-matters, or the deepening pessimism about politics and human society, we find the whole history of Platonism anticipated in Plato himself. But before the partial fusion of Greek philosophies in Neoplatonism could take place there had to be a new development and transformation of all the older schools. Heracleitus and the

Cynics had a new life in Stoicism; the Atomists and Cyrenaics joined to produce Epicureanism; the Eleatics and Megarians, and the Socratic Plato, on one side, lived on, to some extent, in the Scepticism of the post-Aristotelian period. Plato, the many-sided, influenced them all, except perhaps the Epicureans; and at last seemed to be the inspired prophet under whose mantle all Hellenism might find a shelter against the storm. And it was the author of the *Timaeus* whom the dying Hellenism chiefly meant by Plato, while it was preparing to bequeath its treasure to enrich another creed.

We could not expect that the most inspired part of Platonism—its spiritual vision—would be preserved intact when its custodians became endowed professors at the University of Athens. The intellectual atmosphere of Athens for a long period must have been too much like that of the German universities, at the time when new systems were appearing every other year. The school of Plato was not content with mere commentatorship, like many of the Peripatetics, and in spite of their loyalty to their master, which was a tradition among them, the Academics diverged from his teaching more widely than they knew. After Polemo, the mathematical or Pythagorean element, which had for a time been emphasised, receded, and the rest of the speculative side in Plato was also neglected. The doctrine of Ideas was practically abandoned as unintelligible, but great attention was paid to ethics. This decay of speculation may be compared with the collapse of Hegelianism in Germany, and was due to the same causes. On the one hand, Plato's logical structure seemed to be out of relation to the facts of experience and human needs; and on the other, the natural materialism of the ordinary man reasserted itself against the exalted idealism of the master. During this phase, the Academy devoted itself to a rather arid and timorous moralising.

At the beginning of the third century before Christ there existed at Athens four schools, all firmly established, the Academics, the Peripatetics, the Stoics, and the Epicureans. It was inevitable that free interchange of views should result in free borrowing of ideas, and in breaking down the dogmatism which was characteristic of all alike when left to themselves. Hence arose the kindred movements of Scepticism and Eclecticism. Scepticism not only had a flourishing school of its own in the third century—the disciples of Pyrrho, but

it almost completely captured the Academy. From merely ignoring theoretical knowledge, the school of Plato at this period came to preach its impossibility. Arcesilaus, the founder of this movement, accepted from the Stoics their theory that no knowledge can come to us except through the senses, and then attacked the validity of sense-impressions. Having thus destroyed the possibility of knowledge, he taught that probability is enough for practical purposes. The Sceptics even claimed that they were more invulnerable than the adherents of any system which left objective reality standing over against our views about it. Carneades followed the same path, which leads towards what is now called pragmatism. But every attack upon the possibility of knowledge is foiled by the impossibility of finding a ground on which to fix its batteries. If we try to plant them on anything within the intelligible world, we assert the knowableness of that world in the act of denying it; and there is no place outside the intelligible world on which they can be fixed. The Academics were too acute not to see this; and before long the sceptical development of Platonism gave way to frank Eclecticism. Doubt was no longer a dogma.

Greek thought was now fast entering upon a long period of comparative barrenness. From the early part of the third century before Christ till the rise of Neoplatonism no new system arose; men were content to choose what suited them best among the doctrines of their predecessors. Eclecticism is closely akin to sceptical pragmatism, and naturally follows it. For when scepticism refers us to practical utility as the test of truth, we are bound to ask what is the end towards which action should be directed in order to be useful; and the answer to this question, if any answer can be found, takes us beyond scepticism. Though each individual must answer the question for himself, and with reference to his own character and circumstances, this much at least is implied, that each man has within him the means of distinguishing truth from error. Thus the Academic sceptic was brought back to a position nearer Plato's own. For Plato had taught that the soul possesses, by recollection of its experiences in a previous state, an innate consciousness of the Ideas, which only needs to be elicited by scientific and moral training. The eclectic Platonists, however, had begun by denying the value of dialectic for acquiring a knowledge of truth, They were therefore obliged to rely more upon the

inner light; they now taught that truth is given intuitively to our consciousness. This 'ontologism' is philosophically objectionable; it is often the last resource of the confused thinker who cannot make a rational defence of his convictions; but it had the double advantage of once more finding within the individual the ground of a higher knowledge than can come through the senses, and of perceiving that this higher knowledge, if it is genuine, must be communicated to the soul by some kind of divine inspiration. Thus eclectic Platonism began to display a new feature; it became a philosophy of revelation. The earliest philosophies had been cosmocentric; the later anthropocentric; the last phase (foreshadowed no doubt in Plato) was to be theocentric. This tendency was destined to dominate the whole of the last period of Greek philosophy. It grew out of the Scepticism of the New Academy; but was none the less a revulsion from it; and by insisting once more on the supersensual as alone real, and on divine inspiration ('enthusiasm') as alone blessed, it made a return to the true Plato. There was a slight recrudescence of scepticism under the influence of Ænesidemus (first century B.C.); but the whole trend of thought under the empire was towards belief and piety.

Meanwhile, the Peripatetics also were becoming eclectic. Antiochus tried to read Stoicism into Aristotle, making the Deity a kind of World-Soul; while Alexander of Aphrodisias, in spite of his polemic against Stoicism, deviates from Aristotle in the direction of materialism. After Alexander we hear of no more distinguished Peripatetics, and this school, like the others, was at last absorbed by Neoplatonism.

But the cradle of Neoplatonism was not Athens but Alexandria. The official Academy, with its *διάδοχος* or professor at Athens, fell into an insignificance which continued until, about the beginning of the fifth century, it was captured by the school of Plotinus, or rather of Iamblichus, and remained Neoplatonist until the edict of Justinian in 529 closed the roll of Platonic professors who had taught at Athens for more than eight hundred years. Alexandria had been ever since its foundation an important centre of learning and cultivation, and it was as cosmopolitan as Rome itself. The East and West met in its streets, its lecture-rooms, and its temples. It was there that first

Judaism and then Christianity became Hellenised; the writings of Philo and of the Christian Platonists remain as memorials of these transformations. If we may believe the emperor Hadrian, even the exclusiveness of Christianity broke down here, and the same persons worshipped Christ and Sarapis. It was no doubt inevitable that Oriental ideas should also mingle with European ways of thinking. The wisdom of the East was held in high repute at Alexandria. But those who have sought Asiatic elements in the philosophy of Plotinus are, I think, in error. The whole system may be accounted for without leaving the lines of genuine Greek philosophy. In spite of the affinity between some parts of Buddhism—‘Boutta’ is named by Clement—and the later Platonism, it is not necessary to infer direct influence; and it is doubtful whether Philo found many readers outside the Jewish body. But the affiliation of ideas is, on the whole, a tiresome and unprofitable quest.

Neopythagoreanism

The Pythagorean school, as a theoretical philosophy, almost disappears from view during the fourth century before Christ; but as a mystery-cult, in connection with the so-called Orphic discipline, it was full of life. It represents the main stream of the mystical tradition in Greek religion. The Pythagoreans were strict vegetarians; they also abstained from wine, from marriage, and (their enemies said) from washing. They were in a word ascetics of a familiar type. In Aristotle's time there was little or no dogmatic teaching. The initiate ‘was not expected to learn or understand anything, but to feel a certain emotion and get into a certain state of mind, after first becoming fit to have such an experience.’ The only doctrine was the history of the god—that is, the dramatised experience of the soul's redemption. After a long interval we find a Pythagorean lecturer, Nearchus, at Tarentum in 209 B.C.; and Ennius translated Epicharmus. About 100 B.C. a number of pseudonymous Pythagorean treatises began to appear, among which the ‘Golden Verses’—excellent moral precepts in hexameters—are well known. Bloody sacrifices are prohibited, and all oaths—we ought so to live that all men will believe our bare word; we ought to make friends of enemies, and never enemies of friends; we are to destroy no animal that is not harmful to mankind. The

learned P. Nigidius Figulus, a friend of Cicero, tried to found a Pythagorean club at Rome; but in Seneca's time the school was unpopular and could find no professor to guide them. The condition of the sect at Alexandria, from which the gnostic literature probably emanates, was no doubt better.

The Pythagoreans of the first two centuries after Christ were so decidedly the precursors of Neoplatonism, that we must give some account of this eclectic system. It was indeed an attempt to fuse into one whole all the most acceptable doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoa. The Pythagorean tradition supplied the fantastic number-symbolism, very popular at this time, the insistence on divine revelation as the source of faith, and the bodily discipline which had always been the chief external mark of the brotherhood. The members of the confraternity believed themselves to be true to the teachings of Pythagoras, and defended their loyalty to him partly by the assumption of an oral tradition handed down from the Samian philosopher, and partly by forged documents. The arithmetical symbolism of the older school was now given a deeper metaphysical meaning. The Monad and the Indefinite Dyad became metaphysical categories of wide scope. By the name of the One, the ground of all good, of all perfection and order, and of all imperishable and unchangeable being was indicated. The Dyad was the ground of all imperfection and badness, of disorder and change. The Monad was the sign of the Godhead, of Spirit, of Form; the Dyad of Matter, as the root of all evil. Such, we are told, was the metaphysical dualism taught by the Pythagoreans. But the Pythagoreans were really eclectics, and they produced no master-mind to harmonise their contradictions. Some of them, in whom the Stoic influence predominated, identified the Monad with the Godhead, which duplicates itself in order to form the Dyad, and is the active force which penetrates down to inert Matter. Others, following the *Timaeus* and Aristotle, taught that the Godhead is the First Mover, who brings together Form and Matter, the Creator who gives the Ideas a visible shape. They were not strict monotheists, speaking freely of a plurality of gods beneath the Godhead, and paying special honour to the heavenly bodies. They conceived of God as both immanent and transcendent, wishing to combine what was true in Stoicism and Platonism. Perhaps, in the absence of any great thinkers among them, the two ideas are rather intertwined than harmonised. The Godhead, they said, is

something higher than Intelligence; he is to be honoured not by sacrifices but by spiritual worship. The World-Soul, as in Neoplatonism, occupied the third rank, next after the Intelligence. They held with Plato that the phenomenal world is unsubstantial and constantly changing, the intelligible or spiritual world being alone truly real and eternal. The visible world derives all the reality which it possesses from the divine Ideas, in which it 'partakes.' But here came in with a full flood the fantastic lore of numbers which captivated even Plato at one time of his life. Number is the original picture of the world, the first thought of the Godhead, the determining principle of forms and ideas, the instrument in the creation of the world, the ground of all things. 'Number' was personified and apostrophised as the father of gods and men. But this deification of Number brought them into conflict with the dogma that the Monad, not plurality, must be the highest principle. The Monad must be the source of the other numbers, or of 'Number' in the abstract; and so they appear to have taught. Number is the source of all things, in the same sense in which the Platonic Ideas are the types and sources of all things; but whereas Plato, in his writings at least, had not clearly envisaged any principle prior to the Ideas, and supreme over them, the Neopythagoreans were compelled to give this position to the Monad, as the creator of Number. The wing of the school which set God and Matter dualistically over against each other was equally obliged to transcend this dualism by postulating an unknown principle higher than either. This strange metamorphosis of arithmetical symbols into creative types of objects deprived 'the One' of its mathematical meaning; it became a mystical symbol. The number ten was also invested with peculiar sanctity, as the perfect number, embracing the whole 'nature' of Number. They swore by Pythagoras as the god who had left them the 'tetractys'—a symbol consisting of a pyramid of ten units, tapering to its apex from a base of four. This symbol, they held, contained the 'fountain and root of ever-springing nature.' It was a picture of the processional movement (*προποδισμός*) of life, out of unity into plurality. The tetractys was a figure both of the Orphic 'cycle of birth,' by which souls proceed out of their perfect state of union with God, and at last find their way back, and of the 'processional' movement just mentioned. Pythagoras found this movement in the procession of numerical series, which he originated. A

progression like those contained in the tetractys of Plato's World-Soul (in the *Timaeus*)—the series 1, 2, 4, 8; 1, 3, 9, 27—is what the Pythagoreans called a *harmonia*: it is a continuous entity knit together by a principle of unity running through it, namely, the logos or ratio which links every term to its predecessor by the same bond. Both series, moreover, radiate from the One, the source in which the whole nature of all numbers was gathered up and implicit. The sanctity attached to the number 3, as the first number which has beginning, middle, and end, has lasted on and has had a very remarkable history. But the number 4 was regarded as even holier than 3.

It is not necessary to describe their theory of knowledge, in which they followed Plato, helped out by the use of the Aristotelian categories. In cosmology they taught that the world is eternal, and that the human race will never perish.

They laid great stress on human immortality. The original doctrine was that souls are reincarnated in each generation, passing through the 'wheel' of alternate life and death for ever. This doctrine has no moral significance. But it soon came to be modified by another view, really quite distinct from it, according to which the Soul falls through error from its state of purity, undergoes a long purification from its sins both here and in a purgatorial state hereafter, and at last returns to heaven. With this was combined the doctrine of transmigration or rebirth, incorrectly called metempsychosis. Thus the older idea was moralised, but at the same time changed, since now the individuality of the Soul persists from one life to another. And since reincarnation is always for the sake of punishment or discipline, the 'weary wheel' of existence is regarded as something to be escaped from, a notion which was far from the view of those who, like Heracleitus, maintained the older doctrine.

They were ascetics on principle. The 'Pythagorean life' was a recognised discipline, which involved the observance of many excellent and some unwise precepts. They were also stern guardians of purity in family life. Iamblichus represents Pythagoras himself as preaching against the loose manners of Croton. We have three lives of Pythagoras, by Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. They are of little value as history; but they are accurate

portraits of what the ideal Pythagorean was expected to be. The life of Apollonius of Tyana, already referred to, is another valuable document of the same kind. The Pythagorean sage regarded the Sun as the highest revelation of the supreme Being; but he took part in almost every pious rite, and was initiated into all the great mysteries. In spite of his austerity, he eschewed the coarseness and brutality of Cynic asceticism.

Pythagoreanism, as Mr. Cornford says, was an attempt to intellectualise the Orphic religion, while preserving its social form. It was also an attempt to moralise it; more importance is attached to purity of life, and less to ceremonial. We can trace three strata in this complex product. The oldest was that which taught the unity of all life, the unending cycle of births and deaths, and the conception of a common Soul of the group. The more definitely Orphic element is the doctrine of the fall of the Soul, and its return by means of purifying discipline. But Orphism also valued the passionate emotion aroused by sacramental participation in the sufferings of the god. This kind of communion was what Orphics meant by contemplation—*theoria*. The Pythagorean influence, as distinct from the two factors just mentioned, tended to intellectualise *theoria*. It now meant that free exercise of the Soul's highest faculties which leads to spiritual enlightenment. The excitements of emotional religion are merely a hindrance to the attainment of this calm wisdom. Nor should the mortification of the flesh be carried too far; its object is merely to liberate the mind from the importunities of the body.

In almost all its teaching, the resemblance of Pythagoreanism to the later Platonism is very close.

Plutarch

Plutarch is an important and interesting figure for us, because his voluminous writings have survived. He gives us a vivid picture of the intellectual life of his time. But he was not a great philosopher, and the eclectic Platonism which he expounds in numerous pleasantly written essays marks no epoch in the history of thought. His main interests were religious and ethical, not speculative; and he was a religious conservative of a familiar modern type. His

reverence for Plato is such that when he finds (to his surprise) that according to that inspired man liquid food descends not into the stomach but into the lungs, he says: 'the truth in such matters is perhaps unascertainable; and it is not right to take a presumptuous attitude towards a philosopher of the highest reputation and genius in a matter so obscure and so disputable.' In dealing with religion, he is equally deferential to authority. The following utterance, which he gives as his father's, is characteristic. 'You seem to me, Pemp-tides, to be handling a very large and dangerous question—or rather you are disturbing subjects which ought to be left alone, when you question the opinion we hold about the gods, and ask reason and proof for everything. For the ancient and ancestral faith is enough, and no clearer proof could be found than itself—"not though man's wisdom scale the heights of thought"—but it is a common home and established foundation for piety; and if its stable and traditional character is disturbed and unsettled in any one place, it becomes insecure and distrusted by all.' It is the argument of ecclesiastical orthodoxy in every age. But as Paganism had no dogmatic theology, he will not quarrel with any religion or philosophy that puts God and man in their right relation to each other. There are parts of Stoicism which he dislikes, but Epicureanism is the only irreconcilable enemy. What he chiefly objects to in the Stoics is their cold rationalism. Like Alexander Knox, he could not 'cordialise with an *ens rationis*.' He loves religious ceremonies, which helped him to banish care and feel joy, 'not by the abundance of wine and roast meat, but through good hope, and belief that the god is present and gracious.'

To a religious mind like his, the most pressing of philosophical problems is the origin of moral evil. Plutarch comes nearer to the Manichean solution than any other Greek thinker. The imperfection of the world cannot come from God; for to make God the author of evil is to contradict the idea of God. We must therefore assume two principles, hostile to each other; this hypothesis alone can account for the strife and confusion which we find everywhere in the world. The evil principle cannot be Matter, for we find evil to be a positive, active thing, such as could not proceed from anything so characterless and indeterminate as Matter. There must be a spiritual power of evil, which may best be designated as an evil World-Soul. From this evil principle proceeds all that is destructive in nature and all that is perverse in

man. Matter is only reluctantly overcome and dominated by the evil spirit; in itself it aspires after the good and would fain come into contact with the divine. Matter, says Plutarch, is the Egyptian Isis, the 'Poverty' of the Platonic myth. The moral dualism which Plutarch finds in the constitution of the world is reflected in the individual soul. We are 'double'; and the two parts of us are sharply opposed to each other. Like St. Paul, he is aware of a law in our members warring against the law of our mind. Like Victor Hugo, he could say:

*Si j'écoute mon cœur, j'entends un dialogue;
Nous sommes deux au fond de mon esprit.*

The higher part ($\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$) is not properly speaking a part or function of the Soul, but something above us and rather outside than inside us. Our Spirit ($\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$) is not what we are, but our *dæmon*. Spirit is immortal, Soul is not.

Plutarch fathers his theory of the evil World-Soul on Plato, appealing to the *Politicus*, the *Timæus*, and the *Laws*. Xenocrates and Chrysippus had distinguished good and bad spirits, as did the Christians, who identified the bad spirits with the Pagan gods. In Plutarch's time, therefore, the idea of malignant powers was more familiar than it was to Plato; and this hypothesis enabled Plutarch to rescue Matter from the aspersions which popular Platonism cast upon it, and to claim that Matter 'has a share of the first God, and is united to him by love of the goodness and beauty which surround him.'

Plutarch knows of the Persian doctrine about Ormuzd and Ahriman, and speaks of it with respect. But his evil World-Soul is no rival of the supreme God. The Godhead, in his system, is an emperor who rules through deputy-governors. These subordinate gods and daemons are not (as the Stoics thought) natural forces or laws; they are personal rulers. There is a hierarchy of them; the gods are the superior class, the daemons the inferior. Some of the daemons are disembodied human spirits, delivered from the cycle of births and deaths. Each person has one (or more probably, as Empedocles suggested two) daemons in attendance upon him. One of these two may be the evil genius ($\kappa\alpha\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma \delta\alpha\acute{\iota}\mu\omega\nu$), such as appeared to Brutus at Philippi. It is evil

daemons, sometimes gathered up into the evil World-Soul, who are responsible for the sin and sorrow of the world.

It is characteristic of Plutarch that he cannot make up his mind about superstition. He cannot bring himself to condemn outright any practice or belief which stimulates religious emotion. If superstition is a rheum in the eye of faith, it is better to leave it there than to risk putting out the eye in removing it. On the other hand, superstition is one of the main causes of human misery, and it encourages all kinds of impious and unworthy beliefs about the gods. 'The atheist thinks there are no gods; the superstitious man wishes there were none.' So he leaves the door wide open for superstition to enter, and hopes that she may be willing to remain outside.

Departing from the best Platonic tradition, Plutarch holds that the world was created in time, though he also says that time is the form of the world-order, and began with it. It is unnecessary to follow further his utterances on anthropology, psychology, and ethics. They all present the same features—a combination of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoa, dominated throughout by a religion of feeling and emotion. In all this he is very modern; but since he does not place the knowledge of truth first in his enquiries, he cannot claim to be treated very seriously as a philosopher.

Maximus of Tyre

This rhetorical writer, who flourished under Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, is a pleasing example of a religious teacher rather than a deep philosopher. He works out his theory that myth and legend are the philosophy of the unlearned, enshrining the same truths which philosophers teach under a higher form. The ancient poets, whose prophetic inspiration it would be impious to question, taught the same truths as later philosophers, in a symbolic manner. He also thinks much of the beneficent dæmons, the guardian angels of Paganism. He says that 'he who has heard Plato and yet needs other teaching is like a man who cannot see the sun at noonday.' And yet, in his admiration for the Cynic life, he puts Diogenes above Socrates and Plato. He is an eclectic, like Plutarch.

Apuleius

This licentious African novelist was also a capable thinker, keenly interested in philosophy, and like many decadent ritualists in our time, religious after a fashion. His voluminous writings supply much information about the welter of religious and philosophical beliefs in which the civilised world then lived. Apuleius believes in a transcendent, impassible and inaccessible God; in the Ideas, which he at one time describes correctly as *formae simplices et aeternae*, at another, by an amazing blunder, as *inabsolutae, informes, nulla specie nec qualitatis significatione distinctae*. He is attracted by the superstitious side of the Pagan revival; spirits and ghosts, sacraments and oracles, white magic and divination, make up the larger part of his religion. The end of the *Metamorphoses*, where queen Isis appears in glory to Lucius, and claims him as her pious servant for the rest of his life, is justly famous. Apuleius may here be describing his own experience, but we could believe more readily in the genuineness of his conversion if it had led him to expurgate the earlier parts of his novel.

Numenius

More important in the history of the later Platonism is Numenius of Apamea, who so far anticipated Plotinus that Amelius, a favourite pupil of the latter, was commissioned to write a treatise to vindicate the originality of his master's teaching. Numenius wished to go back from Platonism and Pythagoreanism to Plato and Pythagoras; but he also wished to sweep into his net the wisdom of the Magi, Egyptians, Brahmins, and even the Jews. The respect which he showed for the Hebrew religion is something quite new in Greek philosophy. He is said to have referred to Moses as 'the prophet,' and, which is still more astonishing, to have called Plato 'a Moses speaking in Attic.' Origen tells us that he also referred to Jesus, respectfully, it would appear, but without naming Him. Here for the first time we come across a very probable trace of Philonic influence in a Pagan thinker. He separated the 'second God'—the Demiurge or Creator, from the supreme Being, thereby gathering together the crowd of inferior gods, to whom Platonism entrusted

the part of administering the universe, into one divine Being, with attributes like those of the Christian-Alexandrian Logos. He may have borrowed something here from the half-Christian Gnostics. The supreme Godhead he called in so many words a *roi fainéant* (*βασιλεύς ἀργός*). The second God, though all his divine qualities are derived from the First Principle, is the active power for good in the world. The 'First God' is concerned only with the spiritual world (*τὰ νοητά*); the Second with the spiritual and phenomenal both. He is double (*διττός*) in nature, in accordance with this double interest. The Neoplatonists would say that he is related to the spiritual world by his essence, and to the phenomenal world by his activity. Our world, says Numenius, is the 'Third God.' There are therefore three divine hypostases—The Godhead, the Creator, and the Created; but these three are not equal in glory. Just as the Demiurge is double, so the Soul is double; or rather there are two Souls, the rational and the irrational Soul. This division in the human Soul is the common property of the later Greek philosophy, and we shall find it in Plotinus. But Numenius, according to our authorities, taught that there are two World-Souls, one good, the other bad; and identified the second with Matter. This last seems hardly credible. Other dualistic interpreters of Plato, such as Plutarch, had made the evil World-Soul a principle acting upon Matter from without; Numenius, we are told, invested Matter itself with a spiritual activity, as a living and recalcitrant power in opposition to the good World-Soul. In the world and in man these two souls are in conflict. Apparently human souls may be good or bad souls, and at death these are united each to its own principle. But Numenius also believes in reincarnation.

On the whole, Amelius cannot have had a hard task in proving that the philosophy of Plotinus differed substantially from that of Numenius.

Ammonius Saccas

Ammonius, called 'The Porter,' was, according to Porphyry, born of Christian parents, but reverted to the Greek religion. He must have been a very remarkable man, since Plotinus was contented to be his scholar for so many years, but the scanty and untrustworthy notices that we have of his oral

teaching (he committed nothing to writing) do not enable us to say with certainty whether he deserves to be called the founder of Neoplatonism. Hierocles affirms that his object was to reconcile the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Nemesius, at the end of the fourth century, reproduces two arguments which he attributes to Ammonius, one on the immateriality of the Soul, the other on the union of Soul and Body. The former he attributes to 'Ammonius and Numenius the Pythagorean.' These pieces of information would be more interesting if we knew where Nemesius found them; but they are probably a genuine tradition.

The Hermetic Writings

The *Corpus Hermeticum* is composed of various strata. The collection of these writings probably belongs to the last quarter of the third century, and is therefore later than Plotinus. They show no trace of his influence, and most of them may have been written earlier. The *Poemander* is remarkable for its 'activist' theory of God's existence. 'His energy (or activity) is will (*θέλησις*), and his being is in willing all things to be.' 'Spirit (*νοῦς*) is the Soul of God.' The second and third hypostases are Spirit and Soul, as in Neoplatonism. A curious innovation is the doctrine that the world was created in time, but will last for ever. To the Greek mind immortality in the future implied immortality in the past; if the human soul is to survive death, it must have existed before birth.

The Hermetic writings are the surviving fragments of a mass of literature, vaguely attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, and claiming inspiration. They show an acquaintance with Greek philosophy down to the time of their appearance, with the Septuagint, and with the New Testament. Some kindred spirits have found much to admire in them. But they are of no philosophical value, since they swarm with flagrant contradictions. The world is the Son of God, and also the sum of all evil (*πλήρωμα τῆς κακίας*). Space is incorporeal, but also body. Human souls can and cannot pass into the bodies of animals. If we were to collect the passages which define the attributes of the 'Son of God,' or of the origin of evil, we should be left in hopeless bewilderment. The

main interest of *Poemander* is as an illustration of the boundless hospitality of Alexandrian religion, and of the extreme looseness of its texture. The Hermetic writings are authorities for what has been called vulgar Gnosis.

Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy

It will not be necessary in these lectures to give a detailed account of Philo, because there is no evidence of any direct influence upon Plotinus proceeding from his writings. At the same time, he is so characteristic a product of the developments in Platonism which prepared the way for the great philosopher of the third century, that a brief survey of his views can hardly be omitted. Philo is for us the representative of a type of thought which was widely diffused, and which was fundamentally the same in Pagans, Jews, and Christians who belonged to what is called the Alexandrian school.

Philo, a contemporary of Christ, believed himself to be an orthodox Jew of the dispersion; the fact that his orthodoxy was apparently accepted is strong evidence how far the Judaism of the dispersion differed from that of Palestine. He is an upholder of the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament, which nevertheless he turns into a moral and metaphysical romance by his theory of allegorism. Philo himself calls this the method of the Greek mysteries. It is in fact the only method by which the sacred books of a primitive race can be made edifying to a highly civilised society, when the doctrine of development is wholly ignored.

Philo's theology is a curious blend of Platonism and Judaism. The two creeds were drawing together. The Alexandrian Jews worshipped a Jehovah who was far more than the tribal God of the Hebrews; and the Greeks of Alexandria were no longer content with Stoical doctrines of immanence, and were willing to believe in a transcendent Deity. Philo, like the Neoplatonists, taught that we cannot know the Godhead as He is, while we live on earth. 'In order to comprehend God, we must first become God, which is impossible.' Strictly, we can know nothing of God except His bare existence (*ψιλήν ἄνυ χαρακτήηρος ὑπαρξιν*). But we are safe in ascribing to Him attributes which can belong only to the supreme Being, and such attributes as goodness, which

can be fully realised only in God. The Platonic doctrine of Ideas enables him to enumerate other qualities of which only the copies or images exist here below. The archetypes may be said to exist in God.

Philo is a child of his age in assigning the administrative work of the Deity to subordinate 'Powers.' These Powers are the divine Ideas in action; or they are 'Logoi' proceeding from the Ideas. They are distinct from the angels (in spite of Zeller and others); they are personified only as countless other abstract ideas are personified by Philo, for whom 'all the virtues are virgins.' The criticisms which have been passed on this part of Philo's doctrine seem to me beside the mark. The 'Powers' are not invented to bridge over an impassable chasm between God and the world; nor are they the officials of a sultan who is too exalted or indolent to do anything for himself. Such notions of the Deity were never far away from religious speculation in this period; but Philo does not appear to me to have adopted them. The transcendent Godhead must reveal himself through something; and the 'Powers' are his thought and will taking the form of creative forces. Drummond quotes a very close parallel from Athanasius. 'The Logos is, as it were, in all creation, outside the whole in his essence, but in all things by his powers...containing the whole of all things and not contained, being wholly and in all respects within his own Father, and him only.' In the hierarchy of 'Powers,' the Logos of God is supreme. Philo invests his Logos with the attributes of the Platonic *Noûs*, though he combines with these the all-penetrating activity of the Stoic Logos. He gathers up all the inferior 'Powers' into the Logos, in whom 'are inscribed and engraved the constitutions of all other things.' The doctrine naturally follows, that the Logos is 'double'—it is eternal archetype and also eternal activity. The Logos in Philo is not a personal being.

Philo, in spite of his isolation, as a Jew, from the comity of Greek and Roman philosophers, is directly in the line of development which ended as Neoplatonism. The main difference, as Heinemann shows (*Hermes*, January 1926) is that in Philo, though God sends his 'Powers' into the world, the world is always outside God, and as such deprived of value. 'God is the only citizen in his State.' There is no hierarchy of creative powers, as in Plotinus. His theory of ecstasy prepared the way for Neoplatonism. 'He first

recognised' (says Caird) 'the two great needs of the religious consciousness—that of rising from the finite to the infinite, and that of seeing the Absolute as mediated in the finite.' As a thinker, he seems to me to have been considerably underestimated by his German critics. Geffken has lately called him 'ein wahre Proteusgestalt,' borrowing successively from many schools of thought.

Christian Platonism at Alexandria

Clement and Origen were fellow-townsmen of Plotinus, and Origen is said to have attended the lectures of Ammonius Saccas. It will be interesting, before passing to Plotinus himself, to show (as far as can be done in so very brief a summary as the limits of an introductory lecture prescribe) what form the Platonic tradition assumed when it was taken up into the Christian religion.

It was in the latter half of the second century that the famous Catechetical School was established at Alexandria. It was modelled, perhaps, on the Gnostic schools for the study of religion, and its avowed object was the attainment of 'Gnosis,' which meant any kind of esoteric knowledge of Divine things, whether imparted by metaphysical learning, or by sacramental rites, or by mystical intuition. Biblical studies were seemingly the centre of the teaching given in the School; but all the Greek philosophers except the Epicureans, who were branded as atheists by all outside their own sect, were read and lectured upon. For us, the two representatives of the movement are Clement and Origen, the second and third heads of the School.

Clement tells us plainly that he admitted only the more popular part of his doctrine into his books. The suppressed doctrines probably consisted mainly of a bold allegorising of Scripture, and perhaps contained also certain mystical experiences, not easily described. He is concerned to defend Christian philosophy, which many Christians feared and distrusted as much as the orthodox in our day dread science and criticism. 'Philosophy is not a goblin who wants to run away with us.' He has to support his position by appealing to an oral tradition handed down from the apostles. His theology is mainly Platonic. God is above space and time, 'above even the One'; but He is a

moral Being, whose will is only to do good. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Logos-Christ, has much the same attributes as in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. Clement is not at pains to identify him with the Platonic *Νοῦς*, and he never speculates about the relation of the Holy Ghost to the universal Soul of Platonism. His interests are throughout more ethical than metaphysical, and for this reason he has considerable sympathy with the Stoics. He dwells at length on the 'Two Lives,' the natural and the spiritual, the characteristics of which are faith and knowledge. Faith is a 'voluntary anticipation of things unseen,' 'an uniting assent to an unseen object,' 'the foundation of rational choice.' Thus he emphasises the co-operation of the will in faith, while insisting that in its progress it must go hand in hand with enquiry (*ζήτησις*). The goal of the journey is to become a true 'Gnostic'—a word which Clement will not abandon to the heretics. The Gnostic 'trains himself to be god' (*μλτᾶ ἶναι θός*); a phrase which was not shocking to Greek theology, since 'god' meant simply an immortal being. But Clement also says, in more Christian language, that knowledge of God is inseparable from likeness to Him. The Gnostic is distinguished especially by two qualities—freedom from all passions (*ἀπάθεια*), and love, which is the hierophant of all the higher mysteries. In Clement, says Dr. Hort, 'Christian theology in some important respects reaches its highest point.'

Origen was the first great scholar whom Christianity produced. He strongly combats the Stoical materialism, from which writers like Tertullian were by no means free, and insists that God is incorporeal Spirit, 'everywhere and nowhere,' *natura simplex et tota mens.* His doctrine of the Son resembles that of Clement; but he distinguishes more carefully those attributes which have belonged to the Second Person of the Trinity from all eternity, from those which were assumed at the Incarnation. He attempts, as Clement did not, to determine the special office of the Holy Ghost in relation to the world.

God created the world out of nothing. Our world had a beginning; but it is only one in an innumerable series of worlds, which had no beginning in time. All things began in unity, and will end in unity. The first creation was of innocent spirits, some of whom fell by their own fault from the 'first estate of good.' Others—the good angels and the stars (for Origen endows the

heavenly bodies with Souls) did not fall. The world which we know was made to be the scene of suffering and discipline for guilty Souls, who are here expiating their ante-natal sin. Thus Origen holds the Platonic doctrine of the Soul's fall, though he does not believe in reincarnation. Soul is Spirit in process of redemption. 'Spirit has somehow become Soul, and Soul when it is restored to its right condition becomes Spirit.' But during the process of restoration 'the Spirit is with the Soul as a master and director, associated with it to remind it of the good, and to accuse and punish it for its faults.' If the Soul be disobedient and obstinate in revolt, it will be divided from the Spirit after it leaves the body. The Soul which is exalted by following the Spirit must put off its nature as Soul and become spiritual. God never speaks to us from outside; what we regard as a 'divine sensation' (*θόα αἴσθησις*) is only externalised by our minds. The real agent in sanctification is the indwelling Logos, who reveals himself both in history and in the inner life of the individual, as men are able to receive him.

It is well known that Origen deviated from ecclesiastical orthodoxy in teaching, or rather hoping, that all men will be saved at the last. He was led to this opinion partly by the argument that God cannot hate any one, or render evil for evil; and partly by the purely Platonic doctrine that man is a 'spiritual nature' (*νορὰ φύσις*), and that spiritual natures cannot perish everlastingly. He is aware that this view comes into conflict with the New Testament. But who, he asks, can interpret the eschatology of the Gospels literally? How can Spirits 'gnash their teeth'? How can the stars, which are much larger than the earth, 'fall from heaven' upon it? It is not the empirical self which survives, but the Soul become Spirit, which will make a new house for itself, the resurrection-body. But the purification is not complete at death; even the holiest saints, such as Peter and Paul, must pass through purgatory. At last, he hopes, though he will not speak positively, the promise that 'God shall be all in all' (i.e. fully present in every individual)—will be fulfilled, and all alike will find salvation in being made like God.

Origen extends to the popular, half mythological beliefs of the uneducated Christian the same tolerance which the Platonists allowed to vulgar paganism. The Logos teaches men in various manners, according to their capacities;

some must be fed with milk, others with strong meat. The Gnostic knows that there is a mythical, symbolic element in the New Testament as well as in the Old.

The fortunes of Origenism in the Christian Church do not fall within the subject of these lectures. But it may be said here that Origen attempted to do for Christianity very much the same that Plotinus attempted to do for paganism. He destroyed Gnosticism by giving the Church a Christian Platonism which was in every way superior to the barbaric and Orientalised Platonism of the Gnostics. But the price had to be paid, by accepting the Hellenic compromise of a spiritual, idealistic religion for the educated, with a superstitious and half-paganised Catholicism for the masses. And the fate of the two enterprises was the same. Christianity was degraded into a religion of cultus, and Neoplatonism (in the hands of Iamblichus and others) into a philosophy of theurgy and white magic. The idealistic and mystical tradition was not destroyed, but was suspected and sometimes condemned, or driven underground. In the Christian Church it has never been lost. Gregory of Nyssa is an Origenist (in many of his doctrines) who has never been condemned.

The Gnostics

The word 'Gnosticism' is modern: the adjective 'Gnostic' appears first in the latter half of the second century. 'Gnosis,' however, in its technical sense was already familiar a hundred years earlier. 'Knowledge' and 'Faith' had become catchwords of parties in the Church when the Fourth Gospel was written, which must be the reason why the evangelist carefully avoids both.

Gnosticism is the name not of a sect but of a tendency. It was a large and many-sided movement, which was continually changing. Its distinguishing feature was, as I have said, its claim to esoteric knowledge, to be gained either by sacramental and magical rites, with their appropriate discipline, or by secret teachings, or by divine inspiration. It was not, as Harnack says, 'an acute Hellenising of Christianity.' 'Hellenism' at this period is only another name for European culture, and Gnosticism certainly does not represent

European culture. When real Hellenism came into contact with Gnosticism, it felt itself strongly repelled, as by an alien and hostile influence: there is no more earnest polemic in the *Enneads* than the chapters in which Plotinus denounces the Gnostics. Gnosticism sprang up first in Syria, and through its great period, in the second century, it bore the signs of an Eastern movement, and was marked by characteristics which belonged to no Greek philosophy. It was not Greek to allow the mythological imagination to run riot in serious thinking. Greece had a mythology, but the philosophers did not invent it. Plato created myths, but did not present them as science. The Greeks sought for pure concepts, which could be used as symbols having a fixed connotation in philosophical discussion. The Gnostics turned abstractions into spirits, and created a quite peculiar transcendental mythology, which blossomed out into the wildest luxuriance.

Reitzenstein has shown that there was a pre-Christian Gnosticism in the Levant, from which in fact the Hermetic writings had their origin. But the movement acquired a new impetus by its contact with Christianity, and it is convenient to treat it as a half-Christian development of Babylonian, Persian, and Egyptian religious ideas, blended in very various proportions.

The Gnostics were free-thinkers as compared with the great Church, refusing to be fettered by a 'tradition' which was really the average Christian consciousness. They had no wish to make their doctrine acceptable to everybody; they recognised unalterable differences in the moral and intellectual status of believers, who were not all capable of acquiring 'Gnosis.' On the other hand they were not votaries of pure science or philosophy. Their professed aim was the liberation of the spirit from the trammels of the flesh, that it might enjoy communion with God and knowledge of Him.

Their speculation was a barbarised Platonism, in which all history is sublimated into a dramatic poem, describing allegorically the fortunes of shadowy personifications. All real history is supramundane; the historical Jesus disappears with the rest of past events. These dramas of the invisible were sketched according to taste; there were no schisms among the Gnostics, for whom, according to Tertullian, *schisma est unitas ipsa*. They mostly agreed in holding that below the supreme God, the Father, there are numerous

spiritual beings who are arranged in pairs, male and female. These are the manifestations of the unknowable God, and taken together they constitute the Pleroma, or totality of the divine attributes. Valentinus, the most influential of the Gnostic teachers, called these beings *Æons*. They fill in his system the place of the Platonic Ideas. One of these *Æons*, Sophia, fell, and thereby called this lower world into being, the agent in creation being the Demiurge, the son of Sophia, a blind though not intentionally malignant being, who is strangely identified with the God of the Jews. The great object of the soul is to escape from the tyranny of this unintelligent power. The Pleroma has been broken up by the lapse of one of its members, and the loss can only be repaired by the redemption effected by a superior *Æon*, Christ. This *Æon*, in the character of 'Saviour,' comes down like a knight-errant to rescue the truant Sophia and restore her to her home.

The worship of the Gnostics was highly ritualistic, and was allied with magic and freemasonry. In morals they were generally ascetic, but sometimes antinomian, like other 'despisers of the flesh' in the history of religion. The nearest parallel perhaps is the 'Brethren of the Free Spirit' and similar heretical mystics of the Middle Ages. The Gnostic associations took every imaginable form of union—churches, mystery-cults, strictly private philosophical schools, free unions for edification, entertainments by charlatans and deceived deceivers, and attempts at founding new religions based on Christianity. This is not the place to estimate the debt which the Church owed to the movement, especially in the field of Biblical scholarship. It quarrelled with the Gnostics mainly on the Old Testament, the creation of the world, the unity and equality of the human race, and the historical Christ. The contest was severe enough to oblige the Church to stiffen her organisation, which was on the whole a misfortune. In the time of Plotinus, Gnosticism was a spent force. Its last teacher of note, Bardesanes, died about 240. But Plotinus would not have paid so much attention to condemning their attitude towards the visible world, if their opinions had not been widely held among those with whom he associated. Plotinus disliked them for caricaturing his own creed. There was much similarity between parts of his teaching and theirs, but their arrogance and perversity were intolerable to him. They claimed a superior science, transmitted mysteriously, and chiefly through secret tradition. This 'science'

concerned only God and the invisible world. Like Justin Martyr, they turned impatiently away from teachers who wished to make them learn the exact sciences. They threw Aristotle aside, and revered the *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*. Like the Neoplatonists, they taught that the Soul, which has lost its way in the dark, must return to God. Like them, they believed that there is a divine spark in the Soul which can light us through the gloom. Like them again, they held that this desire to return to God is not an individual affair only, but a cosmic movement. They also spoke of the Godhead as beyond existence. Plotinus falls foul of them mainly for their pessimism about the visible world, and for their impiety in not recognising the sun and stars as the abodes of Deity. Campanella makes exactly the same complaint against the despisers of the visible world in his day.

*'Deem you that only you have thought and sense,
While heaven and all its wonders, sun and earth,
Scorned in your dullness, lack intelligence?
Fool! what produced you? These things gave you birth:
So have they mind and God.'*

But no doubt he also disliked their Christology, which must have held a larger place in their teaching than their orthodox opponents would lead us to suppose; otherwise they would not have considered themselves Christians. It may be that the extant *Pistis Sophia* gives us a fair notion of the kind of Gnosticism which Plotinus encountered at Rome. This curious treatise teaches that the child takes in evil with its food, which is 'material.' Jesus bids us 'say good-bye to the world and all its associations, lest we acquire more Matter (*ύλας*) than that which we have in us.' But the book also recognises a 'necessity,' which forces men to sin. The remedy is by means of sacraments.

Plotinus also objects against the Gnostics that they intercalate unnecessary grades in the spiritual world; that they exclude divine influence from part of nature, viz. the material world; that they ascribe the existence of the phenomenal world to the fall of the Soul; and that they call the vilest of men their brothers, while denying the divinity of the heavenly bodies. He speaks bitterly of their arrogant disrespect for the great masters of Greek philosophy; and in one place alludes to 'the fraud which at present invades mankind': this

can hardly be anything else than the Christian religion. The Gnostics also, he says, attempt to account for the creation of the world in time, ignorant that it has existed from all eternity. Again, they deny the plurality of gods: Plotinus attempts a defence of polytheism. They practise absurd magical arts, and claim without justification that they can cure diseases by these means. They are lifted up with ridiculous pride; and, lastly, they presume to speak of God, without possessing true virtue.

Many of the writers whose views have been cursorily summarised in this chapter are known to us only from fragments quoted by later writers, or from *ex parte* statements about the opinions which they held. We cannot be sure that we have the means of doing them justice. But it is probably safe to say that between Aristotle and Plotinus no thinker quite in the first rank attached himself to the school of Plato. The only two who may claim to have anticipated Plotinus in 'some of his distinctive doctrines are Numenius (according to some third-century students who knew his writings) and Philo. Philo is a very interesting figure; but he suffers from the almost inevitable contradictions which lie in wait for all who try to square an idealistic philosophy with a dogmatic theology. His God, though exalted above existence, must preserve some of the attributes of Jehovah; his Logos must not be too personal; his daemons must be something like angels. It remains for us to consider briefly the relation of Plotinus to his predecessors.

Plotinus has often been called an eclectic. By some, like Jules Simon, the word has been used as a compliment; eclecticism for him consists in harmonising and combining the best that has been said by different schools. Others have used it as a reproach: an eclectic philosopher is one who clothes himself in a patch-work mantle. But Plotinus was not consciously an eclectic in either sense. He wished to be a Platonist, and indeed a conservative Platonist. Nothing would have pleased him better than the encomium of Augustine, who finds in Plotinus nothing less than Plato himself come to life again. But though he wished to go back from the Platonists to Plato himself, and for this reason was unwilling to be called an Academic, his reverential temper made him reluctant to acknowledge any serious errors in other 'ancient philosophers of blessed memory,' even when they seemed to be at variance

with each other or with his master. This deference to antiquity, always prominent in classical literature, was very strong in the third century, when creative genius was at a low ebb. Thinkers under the empire felt it to be incumbent on them to harmonise differences as far as possible, as though the divergent views of the ancients were but superficial discrepancies covering a fundamental unity. Plotinus even maintains that his three Divine hypostases, the One, Spirit, and Soul, are to be found not only in Plato but in Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, and Empedocles, though in the case of Anaxagoras he admits that 'in consequence of his early date he has not treated the question thoroughly.' But to Plato alone he attributes plenary inspiration. He will not admit that he ever differs from his master's teaching. Again and again we find such protestations as this: 'This doctrine is not new; it was professed from the most ancient times, though without being developed explicitly. We wish only to be the interpreters of the ancients, and to show by the evidence of Plato himself that they had the same opinions as ourselves.' Plotinus himself, as I have said, was treated with almost equal reverence after his death. The epithet, 'most divine' (*θειότατος*), was reserved for him, and occurs often in Proclus and Simplicius. Next to Plato, and not much behind him, is Pythagoras, from whom Plotinus never consciously differs. Pythagoras is only named thrice; but this is no token of neglect, since even Plato is rarely mentioned by name. However, Plotinus admits very little into his system from Pythagorean sources that had not been admitted by Plato himself after he came under Pythagorean influences. The symbolism of numbers, which played an important part in the writings of the later Neoplatonists, is touched upon by Plotinus in a slight and almost perfunctory way. Aristotle is treated with less deference. Plotinus regards him as an ally against the materialism of the Stoics and Epicureans; but he frankly criticises his categories, and hardly does justice to the considerable obligations which a modern reader readily observes in the *Enneads*. Some of these obligations are of great importance. For instance, the fundamental distinction of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*, which he owes to Aristotle, is as essential to the philosophy of Plotinus as the Platonic distinction of unity and plurality. The One is defined, in Aristotelian rather than Platonic fashion, as absolute activity. It is an Aristotelian doctrine that no potentiality can achieve potency without a previously existing activity. The

world of Ideas is alive for Plotinus, since each Idea is an 'activity.' Every Idea is the original type of a definite individual. All general Ideas betoken something qualitative or quantitative, and in so far, are characters of particulars. The eternity of the world was a Peripatetic dogma, on which the later Platonists had wavered. There are also several points in psychology, in which unacknowledged obligations to Aristotle can be traced. The *Enneads* give one the impression that Plotinus knew Aristotle as well as he knew Plato. Although he is not much interested in biological speculation as such, he shows intimate knowledge of nearly all the most important works of Aristotle, and has welded much of his thought firmly into his own system. If these obligations are too scantily acknowledged, we must remember that there had been a very active interchange of ideas between the Academy and the Peripatetics before Plotinus, and also that Plotinus was probably anxious to vindicate his orthodoxy as a Platonist in face of the jealousy of the Athenian school, who were the established church of Platonism and had the Diadochus over them.

The attitude of Plotinus towards Stoicism was in the main hostile. One of the main objects of his life was to combat materialism in all its forms, and to establish on a firm basis the spiritual nature of reality. The Stoics were not among the 'ancients of blessed memory' whose dogmas it is impious to attack. And yet Plotinus owes a great debt to them—only less than his debt to Plato and Aristotle. The so-called dynamic pantheism of Plotinus (the name is not very happy)—the doctrine that the living forces of the Deity permeate the whole of nature—is Stoical. It was the Stoics who taught him that 'Matter,' so far as it exists, is the creation of God, Perhaps, as De Faye says, the Stoa helped him to reject Gnostic dualism and pessimism. The terms *λόγος* and *πνοῦμα*, the former of which is used very freely, the latter only in two or three places in the *Enneads*, belong to Stoical nomenclature. The Neoplatonic ethics, in their indifference to external interests and concentration upon the subjective condition of the individual, are Stoical, and also in their very close connexion of theory with practice. These obligations to the Stoa were not direct borrowings. The eclectic Platonists, as we have seen, had already adopted Stoical doctrines, and Plotinus was probably hardly aware that not much sanction could be found for them in Plato. He sums up his quarrel with

Stoicism and kindred theories in the seventh book of the Fourth Ennead. It is a radical mistake, he says, to explain the higher by the lower, and to suppose that the merely potential can of itself develop actuality.

Can we trace any debts in Plotinus to the sceptical developments of Platonism, of which a short sketch has been given earlier in this chapter, or does he reject the agnosticism of the Academy as an aberration and a misunderstanding of Plato? The answer is that there is indeed a sceptical element in Plotinus; but it is like the so-called scepticism of Bradley, of which Höffding speaks in words which are helpful also to the understanding of Plotinus. 'Scepticism is hardly the correct expression for Bradley's point of view. He does not rest content with a cleft between the labour and the goal, between appearance and reality. The highest is present at every step, and every step has its truth. There are many grades and stages, but all are indispensable. We can find no province of the world so unimportant that the Absolute does not dwell therein. Rather he should be called a mystic; and that he certainly is, when his thought comes to rest, and when he enters upon a polemic against the concept of time and the importance of activity. Here he passes over to undisturbed contemplation, to a settled view, to a treatment *sub specie aeterni*.' The complete experience is beyond our grasp, just as we cannot get beyond the strife between good and evil. 'The standard is the same for reality and value. Every unsatisfied impulse is an ineffectual thought: in all pain there is expressed a disharmony, and there is an incitement to do away with this conflict. Our thought is always aspiring to something which is more than thought, our personality to something more than personality, our morality to something higher than all morals.' Even the highest that we can discover implies as its logical *prius* something unknown to us. Scepticism has thus a partial justification, in that we come to recognise the inadequacy of every synthesis except the last. It is used, not to destroy absolutism, but to establish it.

Life of Plotinus

Our chief authority for the life of Plotinus is the short biography written by his disciple Porphyry, who knew the philosopher intimately during the last six years of his life. He was an enthusiastic admirer not only of his master's teaching but of his character, and we may suspect some tendency to portray Plotinus as the typical philosopher - saint. But in spite of a few legendary details, in which miraculous powers are attributed to his master, Porphyry gives us the impression of being a conscientious and accurate biographer, and his picture of the personality of Plotinus is clear and convincing as well as attractive.

The name Plotinus is Roman. It is possible that the philosopher was descended from a freedman of Trajan, who on his emancipation called himself after the empress Plotina. But this is mere conjecture; an Egyptian with a Roman name in the third century may have belonged to any of the numerous races which made up the population of Egypt. Plotinus would never talk about his family or his country. He seemed, says Porphyry, to be ashamed of being 'in the body.' His birthplace is uncertain. Porphyry did not know it; Eunapius says that he was born at 'a place called Lyco'; Suidas calls him 'a Lycopolitan'; the empress Eudocia (eleventh century) says that 'some say he was born at Lyco, a *nome* of Lycopolis in Egypt.' He was born in A.D. 204 or 205, in the reign of Septimius Severus. Plotinus would not allow his portrait to be painted. When Amelius came to him with a request that he would consent to sit to a painter, the philosopher replied: 'Is it not enough to have to bear the image (*ἰδωλον*—the mere simulacrum of reality) in which nature has wrapped me, without consenting to perpetuate the image of an image, as if it were worth contemplating?' His friends had to resort to stratagem. A skilful portrait-painter attended his lectures, and watched the professor's face under pretence of listening. With the help of Amelius he afterwards worked up his recollections into an excellent likeness, without the knowledge of Plotinus. We are told that his countenance reflected the sweetness and beauty of his character.

From chance words let fall by his master, Porphyry learned that he attended an elementary school at his birthplace, and then followed the usual course of liberal education at Alexandria. It is plain that from an early age he determined to devote his life to the search for truth, for he remained at Alexandria making trial in turn of all the philosophical teachers who were most in repute, till he reached the age of twenty-eight. Depressed at finding no guidance in any of them, he took the advice of a friend and went to hear Ammonius Saccas. 'This is the man I was looking for' (τοῦτον ἐζήτουν), he exclaimed after listening to a discourse of Ammonius, and from that time became his disciple. Ammonius, whose name is not mentioned in the Enneads, nor by Iamblichus nor Proclus, was a self-taught philosopher like Böhme, the cobbler of Görlitz. Plotinus attended his lectures for ten years. I have already said that scarcely anything is known about the doctrine of Ammonius, who was a lecturer, not a writer, and wished his teaching to be kept secret. He must have been a remarkable man to have retained such a hearer as Plotinus till the age of thirty-nine.

The wisdom of the East exercised a great attraction upon the students of Alexandria, and there was nothing unprecedented in the desire of Plotinus to consult the Magi, and perhaps even the Brahmans, in their own homes. An opportunity seemed to be presented by the military expedition of the Emperor Gordian against Sapor, King of Persia. Plotinus accompanied the army to Mesopotamia, where Gordian was assassinated, and the philosopher made his way back to Antioch with difficulty. Thence, in 244, he went to Rome, which was to be his home for the rest of his life. He may well have felt that Ammonius (if he was still alive) had taught him all that he had to teach; he would not wish to open a school at Alexandria as his rival; and he could hardly have lived at Athens, which was the seat of the Diadochus, the official professor of conservative Platonism. Rome, the capital of the empire and an important intellectual centre, had obvious advantages.

On his arrival at Rome, he opened a school which from small beginnings soon became popular and even fashionable. The emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina showed him great favour, and consented to a scheme which, like the Persian expedition, must be regarded as a foolish episode in an otherwise

wisely ordered career. Plotinus applied for leave to found a city, to be called Platonopolis, on a deserted site in Campania, which was to be governed on the principles of Plato's Republic. The site was probably malarious, and the project would certainly have ended in a fiasco, had not the emperor withdrawn his consent, probably in order to save his friend from so great a blunder. The chief interest of the story is in the light which it throws on the character of Plotinus. He is frequently reproached for building a philosophy in the clouds and leaving the Empire to its fate. But it is plain that he had his plans for the reconstruction of society, and courage to carry them out. The scheme was after all no wilder than some modern attempts to found socialistic communities.

One of the most devoted disciples of Plotinus was Amelius, who had previously studied at Athens, and was a great admirer of Numenius. Hearing that the Athenian students regarded Plotinus as a mere echo of Numenius, Amelius wrote an essay, in the form of a letter to Longinus, to explain the differences between the two teachers. He was the first editor of Plotinus' lectures, and the author of rhetorical and wordy commentaries on Plato. Plotinus commissioned him to convince Porphyry on an important point of Neoplatonic philosophy—*ὅτι οὐκ ἔξω νοῦ τὰ νοητά*: and after a friendly controversy Porphyry accepted his master's view, and abandoned his belief in a spiritual world which exists independently of the spirit which knows it.

Porphyry was about thirty years old when he came to Rome and joined the school of Plotinus, who was now in his sixtieth year. Unlike his master, he was an industrious writer, and produced numerous treatises, including a short but very clear summary of the philosophy of Plotinus, which he entitled *Ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά*, a title which is nearly equivalent to 'The Pathway to Reality.' After some years of arduous work Porphyry fell into a state of melancholy, and meditated suicide. Plotinus discovered the condition of his mind, and advised him to take a holiday in Sicily. The depression was thus remedied, but Porphyry missed the privilege of attending his master in his last illness. Among less notable members of the school we hear of two physicians, Paulinus and Eustochius, Zoticus, a critic and poet, Zethus, another physician, Castricius Firmus, Serapion, and some senators, one of whom, Rogatianus,

renounced the world to live the philosophic life in poverty and austerity. The circle included some ladies, one of whom, named Gemina, gave Plotinus rooms in her house.

Porphyry tells us something of the manner of teaching which Plotinus employed. The works of the great philosophers, especially the Platonists, but also the Peripatetics, were diligently studied, and a frequent correspondence was kept up with Athens and other intellectual centres. In these letters differences were freely discussed, and Plotinus would instruct his disciples to write essays against astrology, magic, and the errors of the Gnostics. But like a true Greek, he did not devote himself so completely to intellectual speculation as to have no leisure for other things. Not only was much time given to private devotion and meditation; we hear that he studied art and music, though he was not personally much attracted by them; and he allowed himself to be appointed guardian and trustee to several orphans of good family, to whom he was like a father, listening to their childish compositions and managing their property with as much skill as integrity. He was also in request as an arbitrator, since he had a high reputation for perspicacity as well as for absolute fairness. During all the years of his residence at Rome he made no enemy, except for the jealousy of some rival teachers.

For several years, we are told, the instruction given by Plotinus was purely oral and professedly an exposition of the teaching of Ammonius. We are told that he had made an agreement with Erennius and Origenes, not to divulge the doctrine of Ammonius by publication. He was fifty years old before he began to write anything. It was Porphyry who persuaded him to throw his lectures into a more or less orderly and regular form. Hitherto he had allowed his auditors to interrupt by raising questions which sometimes broke the thread of the discourse. Much of the Enneads was written before Porphyry joined him, but his writings were not widely known, partly from the difficulty of copying them. Plotinus wrote badly, and took no pains about composition; he was even guilty of misspellings and mispronunciations. Porphyry very oddly refers to these first-written parts of the Enneads as the work of the philosopher's 'early youth'; they were written, as we have seen, between the ages of fifty and sixty. Porphyry professes to find far greater maturity of

genius in the other half of the work, which was written in the six years when Porphyry lived with him. The latest portion of the Enneads was sent in manuscript to Porphyry in Sicily. The pupil thinks that these chapters show traces of failing powers, due to the illness which was wearing out his master's constitution. These judgments do not commend themselves to a modern reader: Porphyry seems to think that Plotinus was at his best only when Porphyry was with him! The whole of the Enneads was written by a man at the summit of his powers; there is no sign anywhere either of immature crudeness or of senile decay.

Porphyry, following, as he tells us, the example of Andronicus of Rhodes in his editions of Aristotle and Theophrastus, tried to arrange the scattered lectures of Plotinus according to their subject-matter. He further made a capricious division of the whole into six books, each containing nine chapters, an arrangement for which only Pythagorean reasons can be found. The plan of gathering together all discussions of the same subject is by no means consistently followed. But in fairness to Porphyry we must admit that few editors have had a more difficult task. Plotinus had weak eyes; he disliked the trouble of writing, and never corrected his manuscript, which was composed hurriedly, amid constant interruptions. His style in lecturing is said to have been pleasing and eloquent. But his writing seemed 'enigmatic' even to Eunapius; it is so concise as to demand constant effort from his readers, who, as Macaulay said of Montgomery, 'must take such grammar as they can get and be thankful.' There are many very beautiful passages in the Enneads, but these are admirable for the sublimity and deep sincerity of the thought, not for the style. It is necessary to emphasise these unfortunate characteristics of the Enneads, not at all in order to disparage the transcendent value of the contribution which Plotinus has made to the philosophy of religion, but to account for the widespread misunderstanding of his teaching, which is mainly the result of laziness on the part of his critics, who have shrunk from the labour of reading a very difficult author. If Plotinus had been studied with half the care that has been bestowed on Plato and Aristotle, the continuity of philosophical and religious thought in the early centuries of the Christian era would be far better understood, and the history of Greek philosophy would not be habitually deprived of its last chapter.

We should misconceive the whole character of Plotinus and his circle if we did not recognise that the intellectual discipline was throughout subsidiary to holiness of life. The main object of Plotinus was to bring back souls to 'their heavenly Father.' The philosopher himself lived the life of a saint. Austerely simple in his habits, though without any harsh asceticism, he won all hearts by his gentle and affectionate nature, and his sympathy with all that is good and beautiful in the world. His countenance, naturally handsome, seemed (so Porphyry tells us) to radiate light and love when he discoursed with his friends. He was almost too patient of interruption, and would not cut short any honest objector who propounded a difficulty. He was a shy man, and signs of nervousness were frequently observed while he lectured. This diffidence led him to mask his own originality, and sometimes fettered his freedom, since his reverence for authority was extreme. But in another way his modesty stood him in good stead. He never presumed upon the favour of heaven, or supposed that private revelations had been made to him. He had, as he believed, experienced the beatific vision of the all-transcending Godhead several times; but such privileges were, according to his conviction, very rare exceptions; they were to be waited for, not sought; he never tried to throw himself into an ecstatic state, and never claims that any mysteries were revealed to him while in a state of trance. There is not the slightest trace of hysterical emotion in Plotinus.

His health, never strong, began to fail some time before his death, but the details of his infirmities given by Porphyry do not enable us to specify the disease which terminated his life. He was at a country house in Campania when fatal symptoms appeared. His friend and physician Eustochius was sent for from Puteoli, and arrived just in time to hear the philosopher's last words: 'I was waiting for you, before that which is divine in me departs to unite itself with the Divine in the universe.' His other friends were all absent, Amelius in Syria, Porphyry in Sicily, Castricius at Rome.

The World of Sense

THERE are two fundamental triads in Plotinus. One of these is the Trinity of Divine principles—the Absolute (*τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ ἕν, τὸ πρῶτον*), Spirit (*νοῦς*), and Soul (*ψυχή*); the other is the tripartite division of man into Spirit, Soul, and Body. This triadic schematism was becoming almost obligatory for a Greek philosopher. The number-mysticism of Pythagoras provided a framework for all Hellenic speculation. Even Aristotle denies the possibility of a fourth dimension on the ground that ‘all things are three and three is everywhere; for, as the Pythagoreans say, the all and all things are determined by the number three.’ Three is the number of perfection; it is the first number which has beginning, middle, and end; all excellence, says Photius, depends on and proceeds from this number. Iamblichus, followed by Proclus, says that the number one is the ‘cause’ of identity and unification, two of procession and differentiation, three of the return of all things to their first principle. The continual recurrence of the triad in mental processes, especially in the syllogism, led naturally, in the early days of speculation, to a half-superstitious reverence for this symbol. In Plotinus the triad is important, but it does not dominate the whole of his thought, as it does that of Proclus and Hegel. The classifications of Plotinus, as we shall have to insist again and again, are not intended to be rigorous and exclusive. In his philosophy there are no hard boundary-lines drawn across the field of experience. His map of the world is covered with contour-lines, which, as in the designs of modern surveyors, are to be understood to indicate not precipices but gradual slopes. The continuous spectrum of astronomers provides a still better analogy. Neoplatonism deals throughout with spiritual, non-quantitative relations, which cannot be represented by diagrams, or treated as logical counters. The very difficult Platonic doctrine of ‘participation’ (*μέθεξις, κοινωνία, παρουσία*) is an attempt to express symbolically the interpénétration of all spiritual existences in an ordered hierarchy. We shall see that this is eminently true when we come to consider the ‘three Divine principles’—the Absolute, Spirit, and Soul; but the recognition of it is not less the key to his anthropology and cosmology.

In their objective aspect, Body, Soul, and Spirit are, respectively, the world as perceived by the senses (*κόσμος αἰσθητός*); the world interpreted by the mind as a spatial and temporal order; and the spiritual world (*κόσμος νοητός*). The organs which perceive the world under these three aspects are the bodily senses, discursive thought (*διάνοια*), and spiritual perception or intuitive knowledge (*νόησις*). Of these, the last alone perceives the world as it really is, *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is only when we exercise this highest faculty of our nature, 'a power which all possess but few use,' that we are ourselves completely real and in contact with reality. This reality is neither an independently existing external universe, nor a subjective construction thrown off by the mind. It is constituted by the unity in duality of the spiritual faculty and the spiritual world which it 'beholds' in exercising its self-consciousness. Spirit and the spiritual world imply and involve each other; neither has any existence apart from its correlative. If we call the spiritual world the self-externalisation of Spirit, we must add that with equal propriety Spirit may be called the self-consciousness of the spiritual world. This doctrine of Spirit and the spiritual world will be further elucidated in a later lecture. Here it is only necessary to say that the spiritual world is the only fully real world, the reality of Soul and its world being purely derivative and dependent, and the phenomenal world being an appearance only, not possessing reality (*οὐσία*).

Refutation of Materialism

The relations of the eternal and the temporal, of reality and appearance, of Spirit and Matter, or, to use the favourite antithesis of Plotinus, of Yonder (*ἐκῆ*) and Here (*ἐντανῦθα*), constitute the first and last problem of philosophy. To the earlier Greek thinkers the greatest *crux* was the reconciliation of *change* and *permanence*. It was not till much later that the debate took the modern form of a war between idealism and materialism. At first there were naïve attempts to solve the contradiction by negating one of its terms. Heraclitus seemed to some of his critics to ignore or deny the static aspect of reality altogether; and the Eleatics, according to their critics, could give no intelligible account of change. The alternatives for these pioneers were to say

either 'All things will die, Nothing will change,' or 'All things will change, Nothing will die.' But Plato, and perhaps still more clearly Aristotle, had recognised that each of these is a thesis which is untrue or unmeaning if divorced from its antithesis, and that the solution, if it is attainable at all, must lie in a closer investigation of change and permanence, which will show them to be not mutually exclusive. After Aristotle the controversy began to pass into a new phase. The philosophy of concepts was partially discredited, and the discouragement of speculation opened the door to naturalism on the one side and scepticism on the other. Reality was conceived by both Stoics and Epicureans either as body itself, or as a quality or relation of body. In opposition to this materialism was ranged scepticism, not the scepticism of Plato's *Sophist*, but a refined, disillusioned agnosticism, which, by its insistence on the relativity of all knowledge, destroyed Being not less than thought. The sceptical method of combating dogmatic materialism was absolutely barred to Plotinus, who had no sympathy with the disintegrating speculation of the Academy. To refute materialism by scepticism would have been to cast out devils by Beelzebub. He carries on war upon two fronts—against materialism and against scepticism. It is always by the standard of a higher and surer knowledge that he condemns the premature synthesis of an infra-spiritual view of the world.

In dealing with the materialists, he sees the issue more clearly than any previous thinker. Neither Cicero nor Plutarch ever alludes to the Stoics and Epicureans as materialists. It is to Plotinus more than to any other thinker that we owe a definite doctrine of spiritual existence. His first object is to prove that the Soul is not corporeal. Life, he says, cannot be generated by an aggregation of lifeless particles, nor can intelligence be produced by things without understanding. If it be suggested that when the molecules are arranged in a certain *order*, life results, then the principle which produces the order, and not the molecules which are so arranged, should be called the Soul or vital principle. Body is produced, through the agency of the seminal *Logoi*, by Soul, which gives form to indeterminate 'Matter.' Every body is compounded of Matter and Form. But the Soul is by definition an uncompounded substance; it cannot then be Body. Nor can it be a simple manner-of-being of Matter; for Matter, being pure indétermination, cannot

give itself Form. Without the coherence given by Soul, Matter would have no determinate existence. The Stoics, against whom Plotinus is arguing, admit the existence of an intelligent Spirit (*πνεῦμα νορόν*); and yet they assert that all things, even God, are only states of Matter (*ἕχονσα*), a *banal* phrase to which they resort when in difficulties. That which *πῶς ἕχονσα* adds to Matter is, in fact, the formative power of the Soul. Plotinus goes on to show by other arguments of the same kind that the very conception of Soul includes elements which cannot be explained in terms of Body; while on the other hand Body is explained by Soul, since Body plainly has a 'form' which does not belong to the material part of it. Changes in the Soul, such as the acquisition of new knowledge, are rightly spoken of as an increase of wisdom, but there is no local or material augmentation. The Soul can neither lose nor acquire parts, as the Body can. When we pass from Body to Soul, we have to deal with a different kind of existence, having laws of its own. The quantitative categories do not apply to Soul. It is impossible for the Body to feel or think; these operations cannot be explained materialistically. The perceiving Soul must be an unity everywhere identical with itself. Still less can the Body think. How can an extended substance have ideas of what is not extended, such as abstract conceptions? Justice and virtue cannot be stated in terms of extension. The Stoic doctrine that Soul and Spirit are developed out of lower faculties is rejected on the ground that the lower can never generate the higher. In other words, the *explanation* of a thing must always be sought in what is above it in the scales of value and existence, not in what is below. The higher does not need the lower, but the lower does need the higher. In the Sixth Ennead he objects that the Stoic doctrine gives the first place to that which is only potential (*δυνάμι*), whereas the possibility of passing into activity and actuality (*ἐνέργια*) is the only thing that makes Matter respectable. This possibility, however, would not exist if Matter were anterior to Soul. Matter cannot improve itself; it can only pass into activity by the help of what is above and before it. Matter, in short, has only a contingent existence, and the contingent cannot be the first principle. If the Stoics had thought this out, they would have found themselves obliged to seek for that which has an existence not contingent, and so would have reached the conception of the Absolute. If they insist that their 'Matter' *can* undergo inner

development, without being acted upon by anything from outside, Plotinus answers in effect that *ὑλη* means that which is the subject of action from without, and that what the Stoics wrongly call 'Matter' is 'all things.' In modern language, while professing to be materialists, they slide into pantheism. Their principle that sensation is the only evidence of real existence compels them to identify absolute being with what has only a contingent existence, and to assign an inferior degree of reality to the higher objects of thought which are not objects of sensation. But this invalidates their own arguments, for sensation cannot prove a philosophy.

Matter (*ὑλη*)

What, then, is this 'Matter,' to which Plotinus finds that the Stoics ascribe qualities which cannot belong to it? It is most unfortunate that we have to use so misleading a word as the equivalent of *ὑλη*. In modern English, Matter means ponderable and extended stuff, the texture out of which objects perceived by the senses are woven, the substance which physicists classify as consisting of this or that 'element.' But *ὑλη* in Plotinus has no resemblance to Matter in this sense: it is *not material*. It is in fact a mere abstraction, a name for the bare receptacle of Forms; the subject of energy, as we would say, viewed by abstraction as separated from the energy which alone gives it being and reality. The most modern physics is approximating, it would seem, to the ancient notion of Matter. The particles of which the molecule consist have been divided and subdivided into atoms, corpuscles, and electrons, till they are on the point of vanishing altogether except as the subjects of electrical energy. Ostwald, in his *Natur-philosophie* (), and most physicists at the present time, wish to reduce all Matter to energy. All is energy, and there exists nothing else. Plotinus, I think, would have refused to take this last step. Energy, he would have said, must move something; motion cannot be moved. He would have been better content with the hypothesis of *ether* as the ultimate form of Matter. Ether has been defined as 'undifferentiated, imperceptible, homogeneous plenum.' Plotinus says that Matter is the infinite (*ἄπειρον*) in the sense of the indeterminate (*ἀόριστον*). Its nature is to be the recipient of Forms. In itself it is no thing (*τὸ μὴ ὄν*), though not absolutely

nothing (*οὐκ ὄν*). In the *Timaeus*, 'primary Matter' cannot be distinguished from Space in three dimensions. But for Plotinus Space is 'later' than Matter and bodies. In discussing Matter, he combines the Aristotelian distinction of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* with the Platonic conception of a world formed by the union of being and not-being, of the same and the different, of the one and the many. Plotinus calls Matter pure *δύναμις*, i.e. potentiality without any potency. In one of his fullest descriptions of it, he says, 'Matter is incorporeal, because Body only exists after it; Body is a composite of which Matter is an element... Being neither Soul nor Spirit nor life nor form nor reason nor limit (for it is indefiniteness) (*ἀπριμία*), nor a power (*δύναμις*); for what does it produce? but falling outside all these things, it cannot rightly be said to have Being, but should rather be called Not-being (*μη' ὄν*)... It is an image and phantom of extension (*ἰδωλον και' φάντασμα ὄγκου*), an aspiration to exist (*ὑποστάσως ᾿φσις*). It is constant only in change (*᾿στηκός οὐκ ἐν στάσαι*); it is invisible in itself, escaping him who wishes to see it. When one is not looking at it, it is there; when one gazes at it, it is not seen. It is made up of contradictions; it is great and little, less and more, defect and excess. It is a phantom which can neither stay nor flee. Flee it cannot, for it has received no strength from Spirit, but is the negation of all being. In consequence it deceives in all that it professes to be. If it is represented as great, it straightway appears as little; if as the more, it appears as the less. Its being, when one tries to conceive it, appears as not-being; it is a fugitive bauble (*παίγνιον*), and so are the things that appear to be in it, mere shadows in a shadow. As in a mirror the semblance is in one place, the substance in another, so Matter seems to be full when it is empty, and contains nothing while seeming to contain all things. The copies and shadows of real things which pass in and out of it, come into it as into a formless shadow. They are seen in it because it has no form of its own; they seem to act upon it, but they produce nothing; for they are feeble and weak and have no power of resistance. But neither has Matter any such power? so they go through it like water without clearing a passage.'

In this picturesque and half humorous way Plotinus bids us contemplate his abstraction—that intangible impalpable all-but-nothing which remains when we subtract from an object of thought all that gives it form, meaning, and

definite existence. We shall understand his meaning better when we realise that (as will be explained below) Matter is Matter only in relation to that which is next above it, and which gives it form, meaning, and definite existence. Thus the same thing may be form (*ἴδος*) in relation to what is below it, and Matter in relation to what is above it. A thing is Matter in so far as it is acted upon by a higher principle. It is a purely relative term: every stage in the hierarchy of being, except the highest, is *ύλη*, every stage except the lowest is *ἴδος*. Every *ἴδος* makes its own *ύλη*. But *ύλη* is generally the name of the lowest rung in the ladder. When the lower Soul turns to itself, wishing to create that which shall be next in order below itself, it makes *τὸ μὴ ὄν*, which is its own image, indefinite and dark through and through. At this stage we reach the limit of the downward movement.

But Matter is not always spoken of as pure negativity. There are many passages where it is said to exercise a positive influence of a sinister kind. The defects and hindrances to which the Soul is liable are due not to the privation of something which it ought to have, but to the presence of something which ought not to be there. Matter is like a beggar at a feast; it intrudes where it has no right to be. It obscures the light which shines upon the soul, by mingling its own darkness with it. As the nature (*φύσις*) which resists Form, Matter is evil. This is so surprising a statement, after all that Plotinus has told us about the helplessness and pure negativity of Matter, that we must consider carefully what he means by it.

The difficulty consists in the inter-relation of the two kinds of judgment—that of existence and that of value. Hitherto, in dealing with Matter, we have been considering exclusively its claim to substantial reality (*οὐσία*). But the word 'evil' at once introduces another scale—that of value. The problems of physical science have, strictly speaking, nothing to do with comparative values. An 'appearance,' as opposed to 'reality,' is a presentation of reality which needs to be enlarged or harmonised, in order to make it a true presentation. It is false if it claims to be a presentation of a fact in all its relations, whereas in truth it ignores some of those relations. It is an error to mistake appearance for reality; for example, it is an error to regard the world of sense as an objective self-existing cosmos. This error may be, and probably

will be, a cause of moral fault; but the moral aspect of the mistake begins with the effect upon the will of a mistaken judgment about the nature of reality; there is nothing immoral about the appearance itself. A shadow has its place in the order of the world, as well as the substance which casts the shadow; we blame neither the body for casting a shadow, nor the shadow for being a shadow. It is, however, practically impossible to confine ourselves to the purely existential aspect of the world. Even in natural science such words as progress, degeneration, survival of the fittest, are freely used, and those who use them are often unaware that they are introducing qualitative and ethical categories into an investigation which they wish to restrict to measurable quantities. If these value-judgments are rigidly excluded, it will be found that natural science approximates to pure mathematics. Qualitative estimates are based on fact, no less than quantitative. These, however, give us a different standard, and a different arrangement from the other; and we are threatened with an intractable dualism. For Plotinus it is a matter of faith that the hierarchies of existence and of value must ultimately be found to correspond. His whole philosophy is based on this assumption. It follows that that order of phenomena which has the lowest degree of reality in the existential scale, must have the lowest degree of value in the ethical or spiritual scale. And whereas, in estimating degrees of reality, we regard that as least real which needs most supplementing and rearranging, in order to make it conform to the two requirements of inner harmony and universality, so in value-judgments we pronounce that to be worst which we conceive to be furthest removed from the thought and will of God, or from our ideal of what ought to be.

But there is an important difference in the two series. In the scale of existence there are no *minus* signs. The lowest rung of the ladder is occupied by that which is all but non-existent. But in the scale of values, as in our thermometers, we have to register temperatures far below freezing-point. There are many facts, and some characters, on which the moral verdict is that it would have been better if they had not come into existence. It is this difference, above all others, which makes it difficult to bring judgments of value into line with judgments of existence. The moral standard is essentially dualistic, and the dualism cannot be transcended without transcending the

standpoint of morality. The existential standard is monistic: all things are ranked by the degree in which they fall short of inner harmony and universality. But harmony and universality are clearly values, and we cannot deny that the purely existential aspect of things gives us no scale at all. The attempt to separate existence from value seems in truth to be an impossible enterprise, though it forms the basis of the Ritschlian theology. That which has no value has no existence, and that which has no existence has no value. But the quarrel between the ethical and scientific views of the world is a fact; and various attempts at reconciliation have been made. The existential scheme may be forced into correspondence with the ethical by making 'Matter' or 'flesh' a substantial reality with evil characteristics, in which case we have accepted metaphysical dualism. Or we may retain the monistic conception of existence, and force our value-judgments to conform to it by holding that evil is only a defect of goodness, its appearance of positive malignity being valid only within the sphere of the moral struggle. According to this view, the *minus* signs disappear when we contemplate the world under the form of eternity. The latter is the solution to which Plotinus inclines; but he is too much in earnest about morality, and too conscious of the positive hindrances which impede moral progress, to be at his ease in describing evil as the mere defect of determination by Spirit and Soul. When we come to the consideration of his Psychology and Ethics, we shall find abundant proof of his embarrassment in dealing with the problem of moral evil, an embarrassment which I think is felt by every philosopher whose system is in contact with the facts of life. Here we have to notice traces of the same hesitation in speaking of the properties of Matter, and its place in the ordered scheme of the universe.

There are unquestionably passages in which Plotinus seems to make Matter the principle of evil. Side by side with such expressions as 'absence of good,' 'deprivation,' 'absolute poverty,' we find that Matter is 'the first evil.' In one place he tries to prove that Matter may be at the same time 'without qualities,' and evil by nature. Matter is 'without qualities' because it has no determination that it does not receive from without; but it has a 'nature,' which is to be 'without qualities,' and this is to have a bad nature. But this argument does not justify him in investing Matter with powers of resistance

to Form, and this is what is required, if it is to represent the principle of evil in the sphere of conduct. Plotinus' Matter is the absence of order, which when isolated by abstract thought becomes the foe of order. In a philosophy which never forgets the partial truth of naturalism, and endeavours to bring all things under one law, the influence of Form upon Matter is regarded as analogous to the moral activities of the Soul. But in the will-world, which is the soul-world, obstacles are not inert. We wrestle against principalities and powers. Thus that dualism, which is the only atmosphere in which ethics can live, threatens to infect natural science, where it has no place. In the polemic against materialism Matter naturally becomes the principle of *externality*, the 'muddy vesture of decay' which impedes our vision of things invisible to mortal sight. But he is sometimes tempted to meet the Stoics on their own ground, and to use Matter in the Stoical sense rather than in his own. Instead of being content with showing that the Stoics are inconsistent materialists, in attributing to Matter qualities which Matter cannot have, he sometimes attempts to argue that the principle which they call Matter—the visible as opposed to the invisible order—is an obstacle to the higher life. So a modern idealist might argue that the God of naturalism, if he existed, would not be worthy of reverence. When he attributes a positive evil nature to Matter, Plotinus is thinking of the materialist's Matter, not of his own doctrine. Zeller does not seem to me to be justified in saying that Plotinus follows the Neopythagoreans and Philo, rather than Plato and Aristotle, in making Matter the evil principle. Against the few polemical passages which might seem to support this contention, must be set the whole tendency of his philosophy. He is careful to point out that though Matter in itself would be evil, if it could exist by itself, yet Matter as we know it has the promise of good. It is 'potentially all things'; its being consists in what it may become. It is the necessary condition of all good, in so far as good is a progress from potentiality (*δύναμις*) to actuality (*ἐνέργεια*). There can be no cosmos without form working on Matter. Matter is always the inferior element in that of which it forms a part, but there could be no greater misunderstanding of Plotinus than to suppose that it constitutes a bad world, set dualistically in opposition to the good world of Spirit and Soul. There is such a thing as 'divine Matter,' which in receiving its proper form, has a 'definite spiritual

life,' i.e. it is enriched and glorified by the Spirit which is infused into it, and which gives it a place within real Being. It is only on the lower levels of existence that Matter, even when it has received its form, remains a 'decked-out corpse.' On these levels, form and substratum are still to some extent held apart; 'Yonder,' Matter too is delivered from the bondage of corruption. And the reason why 'Here' Matter remains dark and dead, imperfectly informed by Soul, is that 'Here' even Form is but an image (*αἶδωλον*), and so the substratum remains an image too. But 'Yonder,' where the form is genuine, the substratum has reality (*οὐσία*), or rather, Form and Matter together are one 'illuminated reality' (*οὐσία πφωτισμένη*). The illumination is veritably appropriated by 'the Matter which is Yonder,' though always as a gift from above.

Matter in this sense is an essential factor in every process, since all things endeavour to rise in the scale of being. Matter is that without which no effort would be necessary or possible. Can we go further and say that Matter, thus regarded, is a negation posited in the Absolute, a necessary 'moment' in reality, without which the finite could not become actual? Is it the benign evil which calls the good into activity, the necessary tension without which there could be no process, no struggle, no victory? Proclus distinctly says that Matter is not evil but 'a creation of God' (*γέννημα θεῶν*), necessary to the existence of the world. This thought is not drawn out in Plotinus, and he would shrink from endowing his own 'Matter' with active powers of resistance. Moreover, he never regarded reality (*οὐσία*) as the result of conflicting elements in the Absolute, nor would he have admitted that without tension there can be no life 'Yonder,' Friction and conflict belong only to the world of time and change; they are a condition of the actualising of spiritual activity *on that plane*; and in that world, the world projected by Soul, there is a necessity for a material which shall not be entirely ductile and tractable. If this world is to be of such a kind as to be the scene of moral effort, there must be a hierarchy of values, and there must be real tension. It is also necessary that reality shall be actualised, not only in every manner but in every degree. The lowest degree, that which is most widely separated from the Absolute, is Matter. Below this there can be nothing, for the next stage below Matter would be absolute non-entity. The 'must be' is for Plotinus a

form of the ontological argument. It belongs to the notion of perfection that it should be able to create in the fullest and freest manner; and we see that this power has been exercised. Plotinus often appears to cut knots by saying 'it had to be.' But he really means that we have to accept the results of the dialectic and the data of experience. No particular explanation of an universal truth should be demanded. The two hierarchies, of value and existence, are so deeply involved in the constitution of the Soul that they cannot be explained and accounted for, as from an outside standpoint. Rather, they are the foundations on which philosophy has to build.

But now arises an epistemological difficulty. Reality, as we have said, is not a purely objective realm, existing apart from the mind. It is a Trinity constituted by the perceiving Spirit, the Spiritual World as its own counterpart, and the Spiritual Perception (*νόησις*) which unites subject and object in one. This law of correspondence and mutual dependence of subject and object holds good all down the scale. *Like alone sees Us like*. This is one of the fundamental doctrines in the philosophy of Plotinus: it is an integral part of the real-idealism of the later Platonists. It is found in Plato and Aristotle; and in a poetical, rather crude form, in Empedocles, whom Aristotle quotes as the author of the canon *ἡ γνώσις τοῦ ὁμοίου τῷ ὁμοίῳ*. It has been reaffirmed by many later writers. For instance, the seventeenth-century mystic Angélus Silesius writes:—

*Soll ich mein letztes End und ersten Anfang finden,
So muss ich mich in Gott und Gott in mir ergründen,
Und werden dass, was Er; ich muss ein Schein im Schein,
Ich muss ein Wort im Wort, ein Gott in Gotte sein.*

The doctrine has a central position in the nature-philosophy of Wordsworth and Coleridge. They were anticipated by Blake, who says:—

*The sun's light, when he unfolds it,
Depends on the organ that beholds it.*

Lotze denies it; but no Platonist can do so. It is the real meaning of Plotinus' famous canon, that 'the spiritual world is not outside Spirit' (*οὐκ ἔξω νοῦ τὰ νοητά*). Thought and thing depend upon and correspond to each other. This

does not imply that Spirit has no knowledge of Soul, or Soul of Matter. It is no declension in Soul to know Matter to be what Soul in fact has made it. But Matter standing alone is only thinkable if it is invested with a spurious substantiality. We do, in fact, frequently so think of it; and the existence of such false opinions (*ψνδῖς δόξαι*) requires explanation. The senses regard the objects of perception as real; this judgment seems to be an activity of the Soul; and yet sensation is not the proper activity of the Soul, nor are its objects real for the Soul. There must be, Plotinus says, an element of *indeterminateness* in the Soul; and it is this part of the Soul which apprehends the indeterminate, Matter. Noûs has to reduce itself to *ἄνοια*; it perceives Matter by an illegitimate kind of thought (*νόθῳ λογισμῶ*). The apprehension is dim, dark, and formless, like its object. Nor can such an experience bring satisfaction. The half-blinded spiritual faculty, the clouded perception, and the shapeless indeterminate object all ‘desire’ to rise together into a clearer light, where all three will be transformed. From this it might be inferred that Matter, as an object of thought, is nothing more than a delusive appearance, which vanishes, as such, when the Soul is ‘awake.’ Plotinus would accept this statement; Matter has no reality (*οὐσία*); but the activity of the irrational Soul which produces these phantasms is none the less a fact. In denying reality to Matter, we do not affirm that it is absolutely non-existent.

Matter in the Spiritual World

When the Soul is awake, and exercising its proper activities, it begins to contemplate a yet higher flight than the knowledge of its own states. It aspires to the life of Spirit; and forthwith that which on a lower plane was Form, becomes now Matter. ‘Soul may in a sense be called the Matter of Spirit.’ Those who wish to find in Plotinus a dualistic conception of the world will be puzzled by learning that the same thing may be Form in relation to that which is below it, and Matter in relation to that which is above it. And they will ask why we have so many warnings against ‘Matter,’ if the word means only the indispensable lower end of each upward progress, the outside of every inside. Why should we kick away the ladder by which we have mounted? The answer to this question will help us to understand several

difficulties in Plotinus. The Soul, as we shall see in a later chapter, is a wanderer through all the fields of existence. It has its affinities to all the grades of reality. But it has its own proper sphere, just within the confines of the real or spiritual. Spirit also, though it may divest itself of its proper attributes in order to contemplate Matter, has its own exalted sphere, where it is at home. So too has Matter its own place at the bottom of the scale. When Plotinus speaks of Matter, he generally means that phantasmal abstraction which we have been discussing, the indefinite and nebulous substratum on which the Soul in the exercise of its lowest and least spiritual activities impresses a vague and fugitive form. But the word is also used of that which, in any stage, occupies the same position in relation to that which is next above it, that Matter, in the world of appearance, occupies in relation to Form. Plotinus speaks of 'what we incorrectly call reality in the world of sense' (*ἡ ἐνταῦθα ὁμῶνυμος οὐσία*). He might (though he does not) speak of *ἡ ἐκὶ ὁμῶνυμος ὕλη*. The word Matter is thus used in more than one sense, and care is needed to consider the context of passages where it occurs. But if Plotinus had held the dualistic view about material things which has been often laid to his charge, he could not have brought 'divine Matter' into the world of Spirit.

Plotinus probably got his conception of 'divine Matter' from Aristotle, who also speaks of *νοητὴ ὕλη*. But Aristotle's doctrine is different, since he does not conceive 'intelligible Matter' as entering into the objects of pure intuitive reason. His conception resembles Kant's doctrine as to the forms of sense. Perceptions, Aristotle says, are not passive impressions; sense is an activity which apprehends 'sensible Forms,' not 'sensible Matter.' These sensible Forms have an 'intelligible Matter' attaching to them, as being images of spatial and temporal objects, not objects of pure thought. Plotinus, on the other hand, teaches that Matter proceeds from the Absolute. 'The infinite' (=Matter), he says, 'is generated from the infinity or powers or eternity of the One; not that there is infinity in the One, but that it is created by the One.' The 'Matter' which is created directly by the Absolute is the substratum of Spirit, the recipient of its illumination; and this is hard to distinguish from the Universal Soul. Lower kinds of Matter are created mediately by the Absolute. 'We must not everywhere despise the indeterminate and formless, if it gives itself as the subject of higher things; the Soul is indeterminate with respect to

Spirit, which gives it a better form than its own.’ ‘Divine Matter’ shares in the properties of spiritual life. The Matter of sensible things is dead, while that of spiritual things, in receiving the Form which determines it, possesses a spiritual and determined life. ‘The Form of sensible things being only an image (*ἰδωλον*), their Matter is so too. Since the form of the *νοητά* is real, so is their Matter.’ In another place he makes Soul the Matter, or the potentiality (*δύναμις*) of spiritual things (*νοητέ*). He asks whether, if there is Matter ‘Yonder.’ we can say that all things there are *ἐνργία*, and not *δυνάμι*. This question leads to an interesting discussion, in which Plotinus shows that he is conscious of the difficulty. Even if Matter ‘Yonder’ is different from Matter ‘Here below,’ it must (we shall be told) have the essential nature of Matter. Must we then admit into the spiritual world the terrestrial triad of Matter, Form, and the compound of them? To this Plotinus answers that Matter ‘Yonder’ is itself Form, being in fact Soul. Is it then Form in one aspect and Matter in another? For our thinking it is so; but there is no real distinction between the Form and the Matter of a spiritual being; ‘the two are one nature.’ But, says the objector, the Soul is capable of growth; it acquires powers which it had not always; if the Soul, then, is a spiritual being, must we not admit that there is potentiality (*τὸ δυνάμι*) in the spiritual world? Not precisely, because Soul itself is their potency (*δύναμις*). Every spiritual being is a Form and perfect in itself. That which is only potential requires some force from outside to bring it into actuality; that which is eternal and self-sufficing is actual (*ἐνργία*). The Soul in the spiritual world is in this state; and even in Matter the Soul is actually (*ἐνργία*) what it is. The Soul therefore is *δύναμις* rather than *δυνάμιτ*, and it is always *ἐνργία*. Can we then say that spiritual things are at once *ἐνργια* and *ἐνργία*? We must say so, because in the spiritual world all is awake, and all is life. ‘The place of spiritual realities is the place of life, and the principle and source of the true Soul and Spirit.’ The category of *life* seems to Plotinus to offer the best solution of the difficulty. There is no real distinction between Form and Matter ‘Yonder’; but whereas the Soul is capable of real development, through its own nature, we must, if we wish to analyse its activities, postulate something in it which is analogous to Matter in the world of sense.

In the fourth book he says 'the activity of man is directed towards the spiritual world, and he *becomes νοητόν*, giving himself as Matter for Spirit and Form, and taking its Form in accordance with what he sees; and henceforth he is only *δυνάμι* himself.' The Soul which constitutes our personality may become the Matter of Spirit. In doing so, Soul, which is essentially true being or reality (*οὐσία*), becomes illuminated reality (*πρωτωσμένη οὐσία*), in presenting itself passively to receive what Spirit has to give; and renouncing its own activity, it is exalted. Every grade of being performs its highest act in becoming the Matter of the grade above it. Thus the ail-but non-existent Matter at the bottom of the scale is redeemed in giving itself as the recipient of Form. In so doing, it is an image of the great self-surrender whereby the World-Soul receives illumination from Spirit, and of the ineffable self-surrender by which Spirit itself awaits the visitation of the Absolute Godhead.

Creation of Matter

The following passage from the *Timaeus* of Plato may be taken as the foundation of the Neoplatonic doctrine about the creation of the visible world. 'Let me tell you why nature and this universe of things was framed by him who framed it. God is good; and in a perfectly good being no envy or jealousy could ever arise. Being therefore far removed from any such feeling, he desired that all things should resemble himself as far as possible. This is the prime cause of the existence of the world of change, which we shall do well to believe on the testimony of the wise men of old. God desired that everything should be good and nothing evil, so far as this could be. Therefore, finding the visible world not at rest but moving in a disorderly manner, he brought order out of disorder, thinking this in every way an improvement. Now it is impossible that the best of beings should produce any but the most beautiful of works. The Creator therefore took thought and discerned that out of the things that are by nature visible no work destitute of reason could be made so fair as that which possessed reason. He also saw that reason could not dwell in anything devoid of Soul. This being his thought he put Spirit in Soul and Soul in Body, that he might be the maker of the fairest and best of works. Hence

we shall probably be safe in affirming that the universe is a living creature endowed with Soul and Spirit by the providence of God.

Plotinus holds that Matter was created, though not in time. It was created 'of necessity,' a phrase which Zeller and others take as excluding any voluntary action on the part of the Creator. But Proclus is not deserting his master when he says that 'with God necessity and will always correspond.' Matter was created in order that the will-activities of Soul and Spirit might become actualities. Was creation 'out of nothing,' as Christianity teaches? The question has a meaning if creation took place at a point of time; but this is not the doctrine of Plotinus. Eternal creation—creation which had no date—seems to be only another way of saying that the world is lower than God and always dependent on Him. The creation of finite things is going on perpetually; there was never a time when God was not creating. Plato, as we have seen, thinks of God as intervening first to reduce 'irregular and disorderly motion' to harmony. But motion must be motion of something. Eckhart is in the same difficulty as Plato. He says that there was no Matter before creation; but there was 'indetermination' (*Unbestimmtheit*). Chaos, then, was not created by God. This seems to be Plato's opinion; and it may, of course, suggest the hypothesis of some other creative agent, blind or malevolent. Plato's disciples differed as whether their master believed in the eternity of the world; Plutarch and Atticus held that he did not, probably wrongly. Nor was the school agreed whether the Soul of chaos, or what took the place of a Soul (some *σύμφυτος ἐπιθυμία*) was a passive résister or actively obstructive. The more dualistic view gained ground till Plotinus, who rejects it. He repudiates the idea of a spatial chaos into which the higher principle descends with its Forms. But he seems to me to have been almost afraid to clarify what Plato had left obscure. In one place he says that Soul could not have 'come,' if Matter had not been there already. Chaignet finds that Plotinus contradicts himself here; and there would be a contradiction if the language about Time was meant to be taken literally. But it is not, either here or in the opposite statement that 'efficient cause must precede Matter.' The higher principle is 'before' the lower; but on the other hand the higher principle cannot begin to mould the lower unless it finds something to work upon. The doctrine of an eternal creation is certainly not free from difficulties.

The traditional Christian doctrine, developed into a dogma after the dispute with the Gnostics, was that the world was created out of nothing by an act of the Divine will, and in time. Creation out of nothing has been ignorantly ridiculed, as if it meant that God took some 'nothing' and made a world out of it. Augustine says that God made the world because He wished to make it (*quia voluit fecit*). He adds, 'When we say that He made it out of nothing, we mean that there was no préexistent Matter, unmade by Himself, without which He could not have made the world.' Aquinas explains the orthodox doctrine of creation as follows. 'Creation is a production of a thing according to its whole substance, nothing being presupposed, whether created or uncreated.' Christian orthodoxy denies (1) the pantheistic theory that the world is God; (2) the theory that Matter is uncreated, and that creation consists in shaping it. The assertion that the creation took place by a free act of God's will denies the Hegelian doctrine that the world is a necessary self-evolution of God. The third statement, that the world was created in Time, was a stumbling-block from the first. Origen could not be satisfied with the beginning of the world in Time, and taught instead that there is a series of worlds succeeding each other without beginning and without end. Augustine held that the world was created not in Time, but with Time; and Aquinas almost implies that he accepts the orthodox doctrine of creation in Time solely on the authority of the Church. Scotus Erigena makes creation co-eternal with God, who is prior to the world only as its cause. 'When we hear it said that God makes all things, we ought to understand simply that God is in all things; that is, that He subsists as the Being of all things.' Action and Being are in God the same thing. The world was not made out of nothing, for it was made out of God. The world is the thinking out of God's thoughts. God is the First Cause—He is Being, Wisdom, and Life. He is the immediate Creator of the Ideas, which in their turn create the phenomenal world. But through these the Creator himself descends to the lowest created things, which all manifest His eternal power and Godhead. This is very much like Plotinus; but the Irish philosopher is less careful than the Neoplatonist to keep the Being of God unentangled with the world of change. Eckhart teaches that the Word of God, to whom he gives the attributes of the Platonic Nous, is the creative principle of the world, and that He creates from all eternity and

constantly. 'We must not suppose that God stood waiting till the time came for Him to create the world. He created the world as soon as He was God, as soon as He begat His co-eternal Son.' The *Theologia Germanica* argues that God can never have been idle, and that therefore there can never have been a time when there was no world. Leibnitz says that God was obliged to create the world, but that the necessity was a moral one. Hegel, on the contrary, teaches that it belongs to the *essence* of God to create; He would be imperfect without His world. This is not the view of Plotinus, who is entirely free from a doctrine which would in a sense subordinate God to the category of Time. He says indeed that the world was necessary for the *manifestation* of the Divine thought and will; but the necessity proceeds from God's eternal perfection, not from His supposed temporal imperfection.

Proclus is more emphatic in rejecting the dualistic interpretation of the nature of Matter. Matter, he says, cannot struggle against the Good, since it cannot act in any way. It is not disordered movement; for movement implies force, and Matter has none. It is not the evil principle, since it is an essential part of the composition of the world, and is derived from the One. It is not 'necessity,' though it is necessary. What then is it? Take away order from everything that is orderly, and what remains is Matter. It is that which, if it had any active power, which it has not, would produce disintegration in that which is integrated, disconnexion in that which is connected. It is in a word that which is no thing, though not absolutely nothing; it is a 'true lie.'

Value of Plotinus' doctrine of Matter

When Plotinus shows that to strip an object of its qualities, its values, its meaning in a moral and spiritual scheme, and its æsthetic properties, is the way to reduce it to ail-but nothing, he gives us a refutation of materialism, which is still valuable. He reminds us that the universe as conceived by naturalism owes far more to the mind of the observer than the naturalist is willing to admit. The naturalist is not, as he supposes, describing what he sees; he is interpreting it. He is translating sensuous impressions into the language of human thought. Without this labour of the mind there would no

doubt be something left, but certainly not a world. The world as known to science is an abstract view of the real or spiritual world. It is a synthesis based on the 'laws of nature,' externalised by the imagination as if they existed independently of the mind. In constructing this world, the mind deliberately inhibits all qualitative judgments, and treats reality as something measurable and ponderable. Even so, it imports a great deal which does not belong to Matter, and which is certainly not perceived by the senses. Materialism would have to commit suicide as a theory long before it came down to the atoms or electrons in motion with which it professes to deal. We shall see later that this argument by no means carries with it a distrust of the truths which natural science can teach us.

But we are still unsatisfied. The Platonic schools were not thoroughly honest in dealing with the problem of evil. Origen accuses Celsus of giving an explanation which he knows to be unsatisfactory. 'Celsus in the next place, as if he were able to tell certain secrets concerning the origin of evil, but chose rather to keep silence and say only what was suitable for the multitude, continues as follows: "It is sufficient to say to the multitude that evil does not proceed from God but cleaves to Matter and dwells among mortal things." It is true that evils do not proceed from God; but to maintain that Matter, dwelling among mortal things, is the cause of evil is in our opinion untrue. For it is the mind of each individual which is the cause of the evil which arises in him, and this is Evil (*τὸ καὶόν*); the actions which proceed from it are wicked; and strictly speaking there is nothing else, in our view, which is evil.' Origen is not alone in bringing this charge against the Platonists and Pythagoreans. Simplicius quotes from Eudorus: 'according to their highest teaching, we must say that the Pythagoreans hold the One to be the principle of all things; according to a secondary teaching (*δύτρου λόγου*) they hold that there are two principles of created things, the One and the nature opposed to it.' After such testimony we can hardly doubt that some at least of the Platonists and Pythagoreans taught, as a popular doctrine, a metaphysical dualism which they did not believe themselves. They have paid dearly for it. I am, however, disposed to think that this 'secondary doctrine' was retained in popular lecturing, not so much from want of candour (for what had they to gain by it?) but from reverence for Plato, who in some of his most eloquent

passages had described the heavy weight which lies upon the Soul while it is enclosed in this muddy vesture of decay. Philo and Plutarch are quoted as exponents of the 'secondary doctrine.' But Philo makes it clear that if Matter is associated with evil, it is not because it is corporeal, but because it is a state of flux and change. This is a most important doctrine, which is the key to much that is hard to understand in Platonism. For a Greek, the nature of God means, specifically, immortality. The gods are deathless and changeless; the greatest of evils in this world is that all things change, decay, and die. Therefore, says Philo, it is not possible, while dwelling in the mortal body, to have communion with God. This is why philosophers seek to die to the flesh while they are yet alive; their object is 'to participate in the incorporeal and incorruptible life with him who is unbegotten and incorruptible.' The body is a dead weight, not because it is material, but because it is perishable. Philo in other places teaches that the mind alone is the abode of virtue and vice; the principle of moral evil is in the false relation which the Soul assumes to the body. False opinions (avarice, ambition, etc.) are further from Soul than the body is. The body, after all, was made by God, to manifest His glory. He also speaks of psychical but irrational Powers, which lead men to ruin. Vice is a kind of higher ignorance, the penalty of a misdirected will. Plutarch also does not really make Matter the principle of evil. 'We must conceive of Matter as having a share of the primal God, and as united to Him by love of the goodness and beauty which surround Him. Matter desires God, and is ever in His presence, and is filled with the most powerful and purest parts of Him.' For him the principle of evil is not Matter, but the evil World-Soul.

These writers seem to have grasped, perhaps more closely than Plotinus himself, the truth that the Soul can fight its battles only on its own ground. Its enemies must themselves be psychic; corporeity, as such, cannot be a real obstacle to the flight of the Soul towards God. When he says that evil is an essential property of the corporeal, and only an accidental property of the psychical, he is at least liable to misinterpretation. The radical optimism of his philosophy makes him reluctant to give evil any footing within the world of reality, which is eternal; in the flux of Matter he found a kind of symbol of reality in a state of complete disintegration. It is the symbol of the indeterminate and dark, and these qualities are evil. Whatever is material (or

rather, transient and changeable), is not yet what it ought to be. It embodies the subordinate pessimism which results from a radical optimism, since each concrete fact or phenomenon is condemned by reference to a standard of perfection. We may contrast with this philosophy the attitude of writers like Robert Browning, who, being intellectually a pessimist, will not allow us to disparage the world of will and striving.

The World of Appearance (κόσμος αἰσθητός)

‘Natural phenomena,’ says Berkeley in the *Siris*, an essay which illustrates several points in Plotinus, ‘are only natural appearances. They are such as we perceive them—passive, fluent, changing. The mind takes her first flight and spring by resting on these objects; and therefore they are not only first considered by all men, but most considered by most men. They and the phantoms that result from these appearances—the children of imagination grafted upon sense—are thought by many the very first in existence and reality.’

When Berkeley tells us that natural phenomena *are* such as we perceive them, he means no more than Mr. Bosanquet, when he says, ‘Everything is real, so long as you do not take it for more than it is.’ The world of appearance may be regarded *either* as the real, the spiritual world, dimly seen by an imperfect instrument and through a distorting medium, *or* as an actual but imperfect copy of the perfect archetype. The real-idealism of Plotinus holds these two views together. An imperfect world and an imperfect vision of the world reciprocally imply each other. ‘A feeble contemplation makes a feeble object of contemplation.’ The world of appearance differs from its archetype in presenting us with a diversity which exists by the side of unity, unreconciled by it (ἐν καὶ πολλά), instead of the complex or concrete unity (πλήθος ἓν) of Spirit; with mutual exclusion as the mark of differentiation, instead of the mutual inclusion or compenetration which exists in the spiritual world; with strife and opposition in the place of harmony; with time in the place of eternity; with perpetual flux and change in the place of the unchanging activity of Spirit.

Although reality is not, as Aristotle thought, a mixture of Form and Matter, these ingredients may be said to constitute what we erroneously call the reality (*ἡ δμῶνυμος οὐσία*) of the world of appearance. 'Quality' is the manner in which reality plays upon the surface of things. It is that which affirms itself as the attribute of a subject other than itself. It is only an appearance of reality, which is itself independent and non-contingent. Thus Plotinus seeks to overcome not only Stoic and Epicurean naturalism, but Aristotelian pluralism. The Form (*ἴδος*) in 'sensible reality' (*αἰσθητή οὐσία*) is without activity and therefore unreal; and its Matter too is unreal. 'Sensible reality' is at best only a sharer in true reality. The sensible world is a reflexion of the spiritual world in the mirror of Matter.

The knowledge which we have of this half-real world is a kind of half-knowledge. Plotinus calls it opinion (*δόξα*), following Plato. Opinion is abstract or unsystematised knowledge of the sensible world. As Aristotle says, it accompanies sensation or comes from sensation.

Modern science is well aware that the world with which it deals is a mental construction from very imperfect knowledge. The visible spectrum occupies only $\frac{1}{10}$ of the known range of ethereal vibrations. We only see that small fraction of the colours which eyes differently constructed might see. The same is true of sound. We hear over a range of about eleven octaves, but physicists assure us that there must be thousands of octaves. Our mental picture of the world is like that which would be conveyed to an audience by a musician who played on a piano, of which all but half a dozen notes were dumb. If that audience got any notion of a tune, the tune would be largely the work of their own imagination, and would be very unlike the tune composed by Mozart or Beethoven. In these circumstances, science aims at consistency rather than completeness.

Nature (φύσις)

The conception of Nature which has come down to us from Greek philosophy has had such an important influence upon human thought down to the present time that a few preliminary remarks upon the use of the term before Plotinus will not be out of place. The early cosmologists made 'Nature' the object of their speculations, and by Nature they meant the primary substance—that which Aristotle called *ἀρχή*. If we ask how they came to apply a word which means 'growth' to the first principle of the universe, the answer is not easy to find. They all, including Thaïes, held that in some sense 'the All has Soul.' The gods were the departmental powers who were in charge of the elements. According to Herodotus, they only acquired names and personal attributes by degrees. Behind the gods was Moira—impersonal and unalterable Law. The philosophers tended to exalt Moira and to disregard the personal gods—in other words they favoured naturalism against supernaturalism. But they were far from regarding the Law of Nature as non-moral. In all early societies the customary *is* the moral. There was, for these early thinkers, a complete solidarity between the sacred traditions of human society and the order of the world generally. The 'Nature' which is the sanction of both alike is a metaphysical entity, a substance which is also Soul and God. The Milesians no doubt tended to think of this living substance as a subtle and attenuated Matter—a kind of materialism which has proved very hard to kill. But Aristotle seems to have overemphasised this side of Ionian thought. Nature, we must remember, was 'alive' and 'full of gods.' The Ionians regarded Nature as Soul-substance even when they identified it with one or other of the 'four elements.'

But as soon as the Greeks began to treat natural science as a special study, the old hylozoism fell to pieces. The religious and metaphysical elements in the idea of Nature were allowed to fade, and a picture of the world was constructed which showed only Space filled by Matter, or, as Leucippus was the first to teach, Matter and a Vacuum. The only divine attribute which was left to Nature was unchangeableness; the only vital attribute was motion in Space. Thus arose the philosophy of the Atomists. Empedocles has not reached the Atomist position. He denies that there is such a principle as

Nature (*φύσις*); there is, he says, only a continual aggregation and dissolution of compounds, and this is what men call Nature. But though he thus strips Nature of creative activity, he ascribes a kind of vital force to his two principles of Love and Strife, which 'make the world go round' by their interplay of attraction and repulsion. Anaxagoras is still more emphatic in denying that there is any *évolution créatrice* at work in the world. With Leucippus and Democritus we come to real Atomism, and Nature as an intelligent principle disappears. Thus the scientific and the spiritualistic tendencies in Greek thought fell completely apart. The mystics emphasised the community of life in all Nature, and sometimes, like the Indians, condemned the taking of animal life for food, on this ground. Heracleitus identifies Nature with justice, law, and reason, and bids us remember that it admits of no 'private interpretation,' but is the source of true wisdom for all alike. But it is not till later that we find the fruitful conception that the life of Nature is essentially an *aspiration* towards higher forms of activity, an upward striving, a doctrine which dominates all the thought of Plotinus on this subject.

In the Enneads the sensible world is the creation of the Universal Soul, through the medium of Nature which is its moving power. Nature is the active faculty of the World-Soul, its outer life, the expansion of its energy, that without which it would be shut up in itself, mute and inactive. On the other hand Nature is the activity of Matter; it is that which, added to Matter, gives it its substantiality, and without which Matter is a mere abstraction or nonentity. Nature is 'a sleeping Spirit' (*ein schlafender Geist*), as Schelling says. It is the lowest of the spiritual existences. All its activity comes from Soul; it is itself unconscious, but casts upon Matter a reflexion of the forms which it has received from above. Thus Plotinus concedes reality or spiritual existence to 'Nature,' though not to the material bodies which receive, through Nature, the impressions of the World-Soul. 'All that is below Nature is but a copy of reality.' The four elements are said to be the direct product of Nature. The thoughts of the Soul are not ideas but creative powers (*λόγοι*). These *λόγοι*, however, are traced back directly to Spirit. 'Spirit,' he says, 'giving part of itself to Matter, made all things, remaining itself in peace and at rest; this is the creative power that flows out of Spirit. That which flows out of Spirit is

creative power, and it flows continually, as long as Spirit is present in real existences' (i.e. until we reach the limit which divides real existence from appearance). This *λόγος* is elsewhere defined as 'neither spiritual perception nor vision but a power that acts upon Matter, not knowing but only doing.' It is very difficult to find an English equivalent for *λόγος*. Sometimes 'creative power' conveys the sense, sometimes one is tempted to translate it by 'reason' or 'meaning.' It is that which, proceeding from Spirit, either directly or through the medium of the World-Soul, and identical in its nature with Soul, conveys the energy of Spirit and Soul into Matter. And that which proceeds from Soul to irradiate Matter is Nature.

But the most illuminating passage on Nature is in the eighth book of the Third Ennead, which is one of the finest and most characteristic parts of the whole work. I give it *in extenso*.

'If, before embarking on the serious discussion of Nature, we were to say, speaking lightly, that all living beings, not only rational but irrational, and all vegetables and the earth which produces them, aspire to contemplation and look to this end, and attain to it as far as in them lies; and that some of them arrive truly at contemplation, while others achieve only a reflexion and image of it, would anyone accept so paradoxical a statement? But now that we are discussing the matter among ourselves, there is no objection to our maintaining this paradox in play. Are not we ourselves contemplating while thus playing? And not ourselves only, but all who play, are not they doing the same and aspiring to contemplation? One might say that the child at play, as well as the man in earnest, has the same end, to arrive at contemplation; and that all action earnestly aims at contemplation. Necessary action turns contemplation chiefly towards external things; that which is called free does this less, but itself too exists through desire of contemplation. But we will deal with this subject later. Let us begin by explaining what kind of contemplation may be attributed to the earth, to trees and plants, and how we can ascribe the products and progeny of the earth to the activity of contemplation; how, in a word, Nature, which is regarded as void of reason and imagination, has a power of contemplation in itself and produces all its works in virtue of a power of contemplation which, strictly speaking, it does not possess.

‘Nature evidently has neither feet nor hands, nor any artificial or natural instrument. It only needs Matter, on which it works, and to which it gives a Form. The works of Nature are not produced by any mechanical operation. It is not by impulsion, nor by levers and machines that it produces the various colours and forms of objects. Even workers in wax, whose mode of working is often compared with that of Nature, can only give to the objects which they make colours which they bring from elsewhere. We must also remark that these craftsmen have in them a power which remains unmoved, in virtue of which alone they manufacture their works. In the same way there is in Nature a power which remains unmoved, but needs no assistance of hands. This power remains entirely unmoved; it does not need some parts which move and others which do not move. Matter alone is moved; the formative power does not move at all. If the formative power were moved, it would not be the first mover; the first mover would then not be Nature, but that which would be immovable in the whole. No doubt, it may be said, the seminal Reason is immovable; but Nature is distinct from Reason, and does move. But if we speak of Nature in its entirety, we include Reason.

If any part of it is immovable, that part will be Reason. Nature must be a form, not a composite of matter and form...In animals and plants, it is the Reasons which produce; Nature is a Reason which produces another Reason, which is its offspring and that on which it works, while remaining itself. The Reason which consists in the visible form holds the last rank; it is dead and cannot produce yet another Reason. The living Reason, being brother of the Reason which produced the visible form, and possessing the same form as that Reason, produces alone in the created being.

‘How then can Nature produce, and, so producing, to what contemplation can it attain? Since it produces while remaining immovable in itself, and is a Reason, it must itself be a contemplation. Every action is produced according to a Reason, and in consequence differs from it. Reason assists and presides over action, and in consequence is not itself action. Since then it is not action, it must be contemplation. In every chain of reasoning, the last link proceeds from contemplation, and is contemplation in the sense that it has been

contemplated. As for the previous link, this may be not Nature but Soul, or again it may be in Nature and be Nature.

‘Does Reason considered as Nature proceed from contemplation? Certainly; but has it not also contemplated itself? For it is the product of contemplation and of a contemplator. How does it contemplate itself? It has not that kind of contemplation which comes from discursive consideration of what one has. How comes it that being a living Reason, a productive power, it does not consider what it has in itself? It is that one only so considers what one has not got yet. Now, as Nature does possess, it produces because it possesses. To be what it is and to produce what it produces are for Nature the same thing. It is contemplation and the object contemplated because it is Reason. Being contemplation, the object contemplated, and Reason, it produces in virtue of being these things. Production then has been proved to be contemplation; for it is the result of the contemplation, which remains immovable, which does nothing but contemplate, and which produces in virtue of being contemplation.

‘If anyone were to demand of Nature why it produces, it would answer, if it were willing to listen and speak: “You should not ask questions, but understand, keeping silence as I keep silence; for I am not in the habit of talking. What ought you to understand? In the first place, that which is produced is the work of my silent contemplation, a contemplation produced by my nature; for being born myself of contemplation, I am naturally contemplative; and that which contemplates in me produces an object of contemplation, as geometers describe figures while contemplating. I, however, do not describe figures, but while I contemplate I let fall, as it were, the lines which mark the forms of bodies. I preserve the disposition of my mother and of the principles which produced me. These too were born of contemplation; and I was born in the same way. They produced me without acting, by virtue of being more potent reasons and contemplating themselves.” What do these words mean? That Nature is a Soul engendered by a superior Soul which possesses a more powerful life, and that its silent contemplation is contained in itself, without inclining either to what is above or to what is beneath itself. Remaining in its essence, in its own stability and

self-consciousness, it beheld, by this understanding and self-consciousness, that which is below itself, so far as this is possible, and without seeking further produced a brilliant and pleasing object of contemplation. And if anyone wishes to attribute to Nature a kind of understanding or sensation, these will only resemble the knowledge and sensation which we attribute to other things as those of a man asleep resemble those of a man awake. For Nature contemplates its object peaceably, an object born of itself from the fact of its abiding in and with itself, and of its being itself an object of contemplation—a contemplation silent, but feeble. For there is another power which contemplates more clearly; Nature is only the image of a higher contemplation. For this reason that which it produces is altogether weak, because a weak contemplation engenders a weak object. So there are men who are too feeble for contemplation, and who find in action a shadow of contemplation and Reason. Being unable to raise themselves to contemplation, from the weakness of their Soul, unable to behold spiritual reality and fill themselves with it, but desiring to see it they are driven to action, that they may see that which they could not see with the spiritual eye. Thus, when men act, they wish to see reality themselves, and they wish others also to contemplate and perceive it, when their object is, as far as possible, expressed in action. We shall everywhere find production and action to be either a weakness of contemplation or an accompaniment of it; a weakness, if, after having acted, we have nothing further; an accompaniment, if after the action we can contemplate something better than what we have produced. Who that is able to contemplate the reality would prefer to go to the image of the real? A proof is afforded by the fact that the less intelligent children, who are incapable of theoretic knowledge, turn to the practice of manual crafts.’

Plotinus proceeds to show how contemplation is the source of life in the higher regions of Soul and Spirit. ‘All life,’ he says, ‘is a kind of spiritual vision.’ He affects to speak in jest about the contemplative aspirations of the lower kinds of life; but he is really in earnest. Aristotle (more definitely than Plato) had expressed the same opinion. Every natural thing, he holds, in its own way longs for the Divine and desires to share in the Divine life as far as it can. ‘The Good moves the whole world because it is loved.’ This is to admit a

principle of movement and progress in Nature. Wordsworth too cherished the 'faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes.' There is an unbroken chain from the highest order of creation to the lowest. Soul, in the very act of turning towards the source of its own life, creates a fainter image of that life—a grade inferior to its own, but a true if indistinct copy of the radiant existences in which God beholds His own glory. Thus the natural world, which we see with our eyes, is spiritual throughout and instinct with life, though its life may seem to sleep, and though its spiritual characters are faint and hard to trace. In looking for them, we make as well as find them. The Soul that understands Nature is continuous and homogeneous with the Soul that creates it. And we understand Nature best by looking above what is merely presented to our senses. We are to do what, in fact, both men of science and poets do, in their different ways. We are to seek for the vital laws, the *λόγοι*, which give a meaning to phenomena. These laws may be scientific, or aesthetic, or moral. In each case it is by studying them that we understand the place which particular phenomena hold in the whole economy. The downward look which Plotinus deprecates is not the reverent and intelligent scrutiny of the scientist, the artist, or the poet; but interest in sensuous particulars for their own sake, as vehicles of voluptuous sensation or animal gratification.

Nature is the rational and therefore unvarying expression of a perfect intelligence. Footprints (*ἄχνη*) of the Universal Soul can be traced in bodies. It follows that the scientific view of the world is reality, not merely appearance. Only we must not make the mistake of supposing that the phenomenal world is real apart from the Soul that perceives it, or that the Soul registers passively a kingdom of facts external to itself. The world of the scientist is demonstrably spiritual, not material. What is real in it is not the aggregation of ponderable matter, but the laws which Soul both makes and finds there.

Natural science limits itself to the relations of visible and ponderable things, interpreted by Soul. It endeavours to understand the 'order and limitation' (*τάξις* and *πέρας*) which the World-Soul has impressed on the spatial and temporal world. But for Plotinus it is inconceivable that the laws of Nature should be alien or contrary to the laws of Spirit. They 'imitate' them, and

express them in their own way. As Malebranche says: 'Il n'y a pas d'autre nature, je veux dire d'autres lois naturelles, que les volontés efficaces du tout-puissant.'

Extension

The ground-form of all appearance is Extension (*τόπος*). Extension is the necessary form which results from the inability of Matter to receive all forms without dividing and separating them. Mutual externality is the condition of things in the world of sense, as mutual inclusion or compenetration is the character of the spiritual world.

Space implies limit (*πέρας*); the purely indeterminate and infinite (*ἄπειρον*) is spaceless; extension is given to it by Soul.

There is no such thing as empty space. This is also the doctrine of Leibnitz, who says, 'If there were no creatures, there would be neither time nor place, and in consequence no actual space.' We must remember that empty space is not the same as physical vacuum. What physicists call a vacuum is simply a space in which there is no matter of the kind with which they are dealing. Strictly, I suppose, there is no such thing as a real vacuum in nature; the hypothetical ether, whatever properties it may possess or lack, must in some sort fill space. But 'empty space,' regarded as a blank sheet on which forms may be subsequently drawn, seems to be an illusion arising from the abstract conception of objects as differentiated only by local position.

If Space were real, externality would be an ultimate fact, for space is the form of externality. Also, objects in a real space would be unrelated to each other, for they could not affect each other internally without overlapping. Two parts of one space cannot penetrate each other. But in reality there are no merely external relations. 'The merely external is our ignorance set up as reality.' In the spiritual world, which is the fully real world, there are no spatial partitions, and no obstacles to the free intermingling of existences which are inwardly in harmony with each other.

The space which we think of as containing the physical order is conceptual, not perceptual; and so are all divisions of space, which, as Plotinus would say, are 'limits' imposed on matter by Soul. Perceptual space is continuous. Even percepts of space are never merely quantitative, since they involve form, which is qualitative. And it is probable that our perceptions of space are always determined by reference to our own spatial position. The above statements apply also, *mutatis mutandis*, to time. That neither can be more than an appearance of reality is argued with great force by Professor Taylor, in the following paragraph.

'An all-comprehensive experience cannot apprehend the detail of existence under the forms of space and time for the following reason. Such an experience could be neither of space and time as we perceive them, nor of space and time as we conceptually reconstruct them. It would not be of perceptual space and time, because the whole character of our perceptual space and time depends upon the very imperfections and limitations which make our experience fragmentary and imperfect. Perceptual space and time are for me what they are, because I see them, so to say, in perspective from the special standpoint of my own particular *here* and *now*. If that standpoint were altered, my whole outlook on the space and time order would suffer change. But the Absolute cannot look at the space and time order from the standpoint of my *here* and *now*. For it is the finitude of my interests and purposes which confine me in my outlook to this *here* and *now*. If my interests...were coextensive with the life of the whole, every place and every time would be my *here* and *now*...Hence the absolute experience, being free from the limitations of interest which condition the finite experiences, cannot see the order of existence from the special standpoint of any of them, and therefore cannot apprehend it under the guise of the perceptual space and time system.

'Again, it cannot apprehend existence under the forms of space and time as we conceptually reconstruct them. For reality, for the absolute experience, must be a complete individual whole, with the ground of all its differentiations within itself. But conceptual space and time are constructed by deliberate abstraction from the relation to immediate experience implied in

all individuality, and consequently they contain no real principle of internal distinction, their constituent terms being all exactly alike and indistinguishable. In short, if the perceptual time and place systems of our concrete experience represent individual but imperfect and finite points of view, the conceptual space and time of our scientific construction represents the mere abstract possibility of a finite point of view; neither gives a point of view both individual and infinite, and neither therefore can be the point of view of an infinite experience. An absolute experience must be out of time and out of space, in the sense that its contents are not apprehended in the form of the spatial and temporal series, but in some other way. Space and time then must be the phenomenal appearance of a higher reality which is spaceless and timeless.'

This argument, which could not be shortened, belongs to a maturer stage of metaphysical analysis than the *Enneads* of Plotinus. But the conclusion at any rate is the same. Space is only appearance. But of *what* is it the appearance? Kant, as is well known, taught that Space is only a form of perception, and added that there can be no comparison between the space-world and the world of real existence. The latter statement does not follow from the former, and Plotinus would not have accepted it. Forms must be suitable to that which they represent. It is reasonable to suppose that there are real relations between things, which are reflected in corresponding forms of spatial relation. The belief that 'the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,' is fundamental for Platonism. What then are the ideas which we learn from our experience of Space? Leibnitz was no doubt right in calling it 'an order of coexistence.' But this does not exhaust the idea of Space. It is also the form by which we recognise the relations of whole and part, and of near and far. The former of these, which shows us 'wheels within wheels,' is as important as coexistence, and without Space we could not conceive of this relation. Further, the impenetrability of objects in space must stand for something in the real world, though it does not hold good for spiritual existences. It is mainly Space, perhaps, which assures us of our individuality. Again, we can hardly draw comparisons without using spatial images. All plurality must be distributed in Space, all unity must be fenced off by boundary-lines, if we wish to make unity and plurality clear to the mind.

Words like 'content,' and many others, show how little we can dispense with spatial images, which, as Bergson has shown, unconsciously mould our thought about Time also.

The external world, as viewed spatially, has much to teach us about ultimate truth. Plotinus insists especially on the attributes of order and limitation (*τάξις* and *πέρας*) which the observation of Nature proves to be products of the Divine mind. Modern science has added the wondrous contrast of the immeasurably great and the immeasurably small, and by proving the immense prodigality of nature in achieving her ends has perhaps given an indication which may help us in dealing with the problem of evil—namely, that the Creator, having all infinity and all eternity to work in, may be as prodigal of values as He is of existences. Plotinus is also too good a Platonist to disparage the reflexions of the Divine beauty which we find in the visible world. His quarrel with the Gnostics is mainly on this ground. They see no value in the beautiful world, forgetting that the Soul beholds genuine reflexions of Spirit in Nature. The world which they ignorantly despise is created by Soul after the pattern of Spirit; in the mirror of Matter it reflects the realities of the eternal world. 'All things that are Yonder are also Here.'

Spatial ideas, as Hoffding says, are our clearest ideas. But they are also our poorest ideas. The narrow frame in which primitive religious thought sets the world-picture ensures clearness and definiteness. But with the advance of culture there is a growing dislike to give the Deity a local habitation.

'However short the distance between heaven and earth is conceived to be, it is all too wide for religious needs. The Deity must stand in a far closer relation to man than is consistent with localisation in a particular place.' When once the idea of the omnipresence of God has begun to occupy men's thoughts, it becomes apparent that expressions like 'higher' and 'lower,' 'here' and 'yonder' have only a metaphorical meaning. Plato clearly sees that we are no nearer heaven by gazing at the sky, 'Those who elevate astronomy into philosophy,' Socrates says, 'appear to me to make us look downwards rather than upwards. In my opinion, that knowledge only which is of Being and the unseen can make a soul look upwards, and whether a man gapes at the heavens or blinks on the ground, seeking to learn some particular of sense, I

would deny that he can learn, since nothing of that kind is matter of science; his soul is looking downwards, not upwards, whether his way to knowledge is by water or by land, whether he floats or lies on his back.' Thus philosophy in the fourth century before Christ had already condemned the popular religious picture of the world as a building in three storeys. But the clearness and definiteness of the old picture gave it a high religious value, and in the early Church there was a reaction towards the idea of a spatial heaven, the residence of God. How far the popular Christian theology is still shaped by this picture, is obvious to all. Augustine regarded it as a happy discovery (which he learned from the Platonists) that he could be a Christian without believing in a local heaven and a material God. The Christian God, he had now learned, is *ubique totus, et nusquam locorum*. The scholastic mystics taught that the Deity has his centre everywhere, and his circumference nowhere. We may say that for Christian philosophy, Space was excluded from the spiritual world long before the downfall of the geocentric cosmology. But popular religion is still almost as naively realistic as it was in antiquity, and spatial pictures, as the clearest of our images, hold their own against both philosophy and science, especially in the domain of eschatology. For Plotinus, they have comparatively small value. 'Space,' he says, 'is after everything else'—the lowest rung of the ladder. It is inferior to Time; for while Space furnishes the stage and scenery of the world-drama. Time gives us the play itself.

Time

Plotinus is well aware that the problem of Time is one of the hardest in metaphysics. In the long chapter devoted to it he approaches it with diffidence, and does not claim to throw any new light upon it. 'Some of the blessed ancients must have found the truth. It is enough for us to select the wisest of their opinions and try to understand it.' We have, no doubt, an instinctive notion of Time, but when we analyse it more closely, we are in difficulties.

Time is, as Plato says, the moving image of Eternity, which it resembles as much as it can. Eternity is the sphere of Spirit, and Time is the sphere of Soul.

But we must not, with some of the Pythagoreans, identify Eternity with the spiritual world, and Time with the phenomenal world. For the spiritual world contains particular things as parts of itself, while Eternity contains them as an unified whole—it contains them as they are *sub specie aeternitatis*. Eternity is the atmosphere in which spiritual existences live. As for the phenomenal world, ‘things that are born are nothing without their future.’ It is their nature and the condition of their existence to be always ‘making acquisitions.’ Each individual life in this world would be truncated and shorn of its meaning if taken, by abstraction, out of the temporal sequence in which it lives. To talk of ‘living in the present’ is, on the plane of ordinary experience, an absurdity. The present is an unextended point, and therefore reality, on this theory, consists of two parts, the past and the future, neither of which is real. Things that are born yearn to continue in existence, because perpetuity is the symbol and copy of the permanence of Eternity, and the effort to make perpetual progress is the symbol and copy of the perfection of Eternity. In the eternal world, on the contrary, there is no future or past. Activity there is; but if it were possible to take a section of eternal life, as we attempt to do for this life when we separate ‘the present’ from the past and the future, the section would exhibit all the perfection of the whole. The form of existence in the world of Time is succession (*τὸ ἄλλο μτ’ ἄλλο*); the stages follow each other. But in Eternity the whole is in each part; all is present together in its realised meaning and achieved perfection. Will is not destroyed, nor activity paralysed; but will and satisfaction, activity and rest, are taken up into a higher unity.

The views of the Stoics and other schools about the nature of Time are found to be erroneous. The Stoics identified Time with motion (*κίνησις*). But motion is *in* Time. Besides, motion can stop or be arrested, while the process of Time is constant. Lastly, there is no uniform speed of motion. If Time and motion were identical, there should be many times.

A second theory, that Time is ‘that which is moved’ (*τὸ κινούμενον*), a view attributed to Eratosthenes and Hestæus of Perinthus, is dismissed without comment.

Is Time then one kind of motion? It is not 'the interval of motion' (*κινήσως διάστημα*, Zeno), for there is no uniformity in the 'intervals.' As before, this theory would produce 'many times.' Besides, 'interval' is a spatial, not a temporal expression. It may be said that motion has a certain 'interval' (between the first and last stages of its subject), because it is continuous. But this only gives us, as it were, the dimensions of the motion, a quantity produced in Time itself. Movements, and their 'intervals,' are in Time; they are not to be identified with Time.

Plotinus then considers the Aristotelian definition, that Time is 'the number and measure of motion.' The difficulty caused by the irregularity of motion here comes up again. If an uniform measure of Time (what Bergson calls clock-time) is used to compare swift and slow movements, we have certainly a standard of measurement, but we are no nearer to knowing what Time is in itself. Time-is something else than 'the number which measures motion according to anteriority and posteriority.' Unless these last words are used in a spatial sense, which would be 'to confound Time with Space,' they only repeat the notion of Time which they were intended to explain. Moreover, Time existed before it was used to measure with; it is not merely subjective. That Time was created by the Soul is true; but not in the sense in which the words might be used by a subjective idealist. Plotinus suggests that the Aristotelians ought to have said, and probably meant, that Time is *measured by motion*; Time is the measure of motion only accidentally. While addressing their own school, they have not made it clear to outsiders what they consider Time to be in itself.

Lastly, the Epicurean theory that Time is an accident (*σύμπτωμα*) or consequence of motion is no explanation at all.

Plotinus now comes to the constructive part of his discussion. Time is natural (*φύσει*); it had to be. We have already encountered this statement in our author. He wishes us to understand that there are some things in philosophy which we have to accept as given facts of experience. The intellectual speculations of the metaphysician belong to the life of Soul, not of Spirit. Things that are real to Soul are part of the atmosphere which the discursive intellect breathes. It is bound to accept them; though the contradictions which

become apparent when the intellect treats them as ultimate realities are one of the means by which the Soul is forced upward to the intuitive perceptions of the spiritual life. In nothing is this more evident than in speculations about Time. The Spirit and even the Soul transcend it; but we are still so much involved in it that we cannot think it away or put ourselves outside it. It is for us a necessary form of thought. Any explanation of Time in terms of discursive thought must necessarily be inadequate; but the contradictions which modern thinkers have found to inhere in the notion of Time are not of a kind to condemn it as 'contrary to nature.'

Plotinus is so little troubled about the origin of Time, that he half banteringly suggests a mythological explanation. 'Shall we refer to the Muses?' Then he gives his own view, that 'Time, still non-existent, reposed in the bosom of Reality (*ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἀναύτο οὐκ ὄν*), until Nature, wishing to become its own mistress and to enter into possession of itself, and to enlarge the sphere of its activities, put itself, and Time together with itself, into motion.' Thus Time, the image of Eternity, arose through the desire of the Soul of the World to exert its active powers. 'For,' says Plotinus, 'the nature of the Soul is restless; it desires always to translate what it sees in the eternal world into another form.' With this motive the Soul of the World took upon her the form of a servant and the likeness of a creature of Time, and made the creation also subject to Time in all things.

Time is the form which the Soul creates for itself when it desires to reproduce the eternal ideas as living and creative activities. It is 'the life of the Soul as it moves from one manifestation of life to another.' Our measurements of Time had their origin in the observed sequence of day and night, which gave mankind a fixed standard by which to measure duration, and in the seasons of the year. The 'movement' which takes place in Time is a 'copy' of the 'first movement' of Spirit, a transcendental form of activity without change which belongs to the eternal world. We are of course not meant to take literally the statement that there was a time when Time was not. In the vulgar sense of 'eternity,' the time-series, having no beginning and no end, is itself eternal. 'Time is the activity of an eternal Soul, not turned towards itself nor within itself, but exercised in creation and generation.' It is 'the span of the life proper

to the Soul; its course is composed of equal, uniform, imperceptibly progressing movements, with a continuous activity.' Thus the external life of the Universal Soul carries with it, not 'outside itself,' but as its inseparable attendant, what we may call real Time. This is uniform and steady, in correspondence with the unbroken activity of its creator. More limited activities, representing particular ideas in the Spiritual World, are spread out, in the world of Soul, over as much Time as is required for their completion. If they were not subordinate to the one all-embracing life of the Universal Soul, we might have to admit the possibility of many time-systems, determined by particular activities.

This theory of Time is interesting in itself, and has obvious points of similarity to Bergson's doctrine of *durée*, which has aroused so much interest among philosophers in our own day. Bergson's enemy is that 'false intellectualism which immobilises moving ideas into solidified concepts to play with them as counters.' By exposing the fallacy which underlies this method of thinking, he hopes that he has restored the independence of the individual and removed from the freely aspiring human will the cold hand of determinism. He proves that the mechanical theory, which is applicable to inorganic matter and its motions, does not account for the phenomena of life, still less for those of spiritual and purposive life. Psychical facts are not measurable in terms of one another. The methods of mathematics (for these are the methods of mechanical science) are not applicable to living beings. We may describe the course of organic evolution, but not explain or predict it. Bergson even denies teleology, as being 'mechanism in the reverse order'; he insists on real spontaneity and *newness* in the movements of organic life. But at this point some even of his disciples part company with him. If there is no invariable sequence and no inner teleology, what is left but chance? And what is chance but external impulsion by an unknown agent? The 'freedom' which, he has vindicated turns out to be mere lawlessness. Science is reduced to playing with appearances which are not even appearances of reality. Reality seems to be wild movement, with nothing to move.

For Bergson, according to his ablest English interpreter, Mr. Wildon Carr, there is no unique sense in which events at different places are simultaneous.

This seems to me to be destructive of the idea of Time. Nor can I agree, any more than Plotinus would have agreed, that 'we are within a movement.' If we were, we could not know that we were moving, and for all practical purposes we should not be moving, just as for almost all practical purposes we may think of the earth as stationary. Bergson is also determined to make Time a spiritual reality, while spatial dimension is only 'material.' The body, says Mr. Carr in a striking sentence, is continuous with an infinite present, the mind with an infinite past. But the truth surely is that Time should be regarded as one of the 'dimensions' in which the Soul pursues its activities. I can see no warrant for degrading one and exalting the other. Nor can I see why the mind is continuous with an infinite past, but apparently not with an infinite future. The future appears to be non-existent for Bergson, though the past exists. He seems to give us an infinite snapped off at one end.

Bergson's most original contribution to philosophy lies in his attempt to connect mechanical and psychical laws with our notions of Space and Time respectively. Our experience of Time he calls *la durée*, a word which has no exact equivalent in English. The characteristic of this experience is that there is no bare repetition, and no summation of discrete moments; but the past flows on into the present, and modifies it. This interpenetration is one-sided; the future does not affect the present; therefore, he says, the process is irreversible, and Time, or *la durée*, must be real. In biology, on the other hand, and in the inorganic sciences, where all so-called changes are explicable in purely quantitative terms, every series is theoretically reversible, since the later stages contain nothing which was not implicit in the earlier. If this were the true character of all changes in the universe, Time would be of no more account in philosophy than it is in mathematics, a science in which duration is wholly disregarded. 'Scientific thinking,' in Bergson's sense, also eliminates all qualitative estimates and all valuation. The misapplication of 'scientific thinking' in this limited sense (it would be better to call it the mechanical theory) to psychical experience is largely due, Bergson thinks, to that 'confusion of Space with Time' of which we have found Plotinus complaining. The characteristic of Space is that it can be subdivided indefinitely, while Time, as we experience it (though not as we measure it) cannot be counted or split up. It is like a tune, which loses its existence as a

tune if the notes are taken out and considered separately. Space, for Bergson, is the mere form of homogeneity, and he differs from Plotinus in making Space prior to the objects which it contains. This notion of Space is connected with what we may venture to think a very vulnerable spot in Bergson's philosophy. He sets Space and Time too dualistically over against each other, and forgets that there can be no perception of the purely homogeneous. Qualitative difference is perceived in any spatial perception; and *par revanche*, there can be no experience of pure heterogeneity; the changing is only known, as changing, in relation to an assumed permanent substance. Bergson, like Leibnitz, impoverishes the content of spatial experience too much. Space is not merely the form of coexistence, which indeed can be conceived, though not pictured, non-spatially. Time teaches the same lesson under a different form. Space and Time forbid us to shut ourselves up within ourselves. We know, if the witness of our consciousness is worth anything, that they are not the work of our own minds. They are real over against the psychical consciousness; real, Plotinus would say, for the individual Soul exercising its normal activities. To the Universal Soul they are a kind of 'Matter,' the field of its external activity, and they represent orderly arrangements within a whole; for Space and Time are uniform throughout, and though they may stretch out to infinity, they are essentially measurable, and therefore constituents of a whole. The Soul can transcend them, because the true home of the Soul is in the eternal world. The Soul is not really in Space and Time, though these are the field of its activities; they are rather in the Soul.

As for *la durée*, I offer the following suggestion. In Time, considered as physical, there is no trace of *intensity*. But duration, which is perhaps the Soul's apprehension of Time, is to a large extent an intensive magnitude. In other words, we are now passing over into the kingdom of *values*. Plotinus, I think, means something like this when he says that the Soul recognises anteriority and posteriority, not in Time, but in order. In other words, the Soul's apprehension of Time is a valuation.

Time, Change, and Causality

It is, or should be, a commonplace of philosophy, that only the permanent can change, change being a succession of states within an unity. These states together form a system, which may be called the consequence of the nature or ground in which the unity of the system consists. When these states follow each other in time, we may speak of change within the system. Where the sequence is only logical, neither time nor change comes in. The ordinary—and the scientific—notion of efficient cause resembles that of logical ‘ground’ only when time and change are involved; but it generally regards events as being determined, not by the whole nature of the system to which they belong, but by the events which precede them in time. But to assert efficient causation means to distinguish activity and passivity in things, which in physical science seems to be an illegitimate anthropomorphism. Physical science, when it refuses to admit Soul, ought to admit no individual things or individual acts. For it the whole is one thing and Nature one process. Natural science is an abstract monistic philosophy. If it could overcome its prejudice against teleology, as some naturalists, such as Lamarck, have done, it would be, in Plotinian language, the psychic reflexion of the spiritual world, polarised as a world of constant purpose. While it chooses to eliminate Soul, which is the only cause of change, it must consistently eliminate efficient causation. Strictly, there is no activity or passivity in things. Ordinary thought would reject as absurd the notion of an event being determined by the future; but if the whole series is one system, there is no reason why the earlier members of the series should have more efficient power than the later. Indeed the notion of efficient causality is profoundly unsatisfactory. It ascribes activity to mere links in the chain of events, which cannot possess it, and denies activity to the system as a whole, which may possess it. Things are not vehicles of causation, Some scientific writers are aware of this; but they cling to what they call causation as a way of denying the intervention of any new factor in evolution. Each stage, they say, is wholly conditioned by its temporal antecedents. Thus when they assert causality they mean to deny that there is any such thing. They assert *continuity*, which, as Bradley has argued, seems to be a self-contradictory notion if it is intended to reconcile change and

permanence. Accordingly, some have given up the philosophical problem, and limit the province of science to the discovery of the manner in which Nature usually behaves. They are thus well rid of causality altogether. This is the more welcome to them, as it is plain that if all events are caused by preceding events, there can be no beginning to the series, which stretches back to infinity. But to say that natural science is 'merely descriptive' is to confess that it is an abstract study, which can give us no view of reality as a whole. For description is only incomplete interpretation.

For Plotinus, things certainly cannot be causes. The ground of each system is some Idea in the world of Spirit, which has been transmuted by Soul into vital law. The only real causes are final causes. So-called efficient causes are parts of the machinery which Soul uses. They belong to 'Nature.'

Bergson thinks that by insisting on the 'individuality' of conscious life (by individuality he means that inter-penetration of present by past states which he finds to be characteristic of psychical experience) he has vindicated the freedom of the will against determinism. In ordinary 'scientific thinking,' duration is eliminated, as is proved by the fact that if the movement of the whole time-process were greatly accelerated it would make no difference to the calculations. Science therefore, he urges, commits us to the absurdity of change without Time. But in truth the mechanical theory denies real change, if, with Bergson, we hold that there is no real change without the intervention of some causative factor. Alternate evolution and involution have been the predestined and predictable lot of material things from the first. But this alternation introduces no new element into things, which therefore remain essentially unchanged. To this it may be answered that Time may measure the periods of each process of evolution and involution, each of which may be a teleological series. If Bergson had said that the *causation* of one thing by another is excluded by the mechanical hypothesis, he would have been right; and no doubt many scientists who adopt the mechanical theory are open to the charge of talking about causation when they mean only invariable sequence. Others have confused logical consequence with causality. Causation implies creative action; it is a teleological category, and belongs to the processes of nature only as determined once for all by a 'First Cause,' or as

directed by an immanent will. It is a vulgar error to suppose that invariable sequence excludes either a First Cause or an immanent will. Invariable sequence may be a fact of observation, but it explains nothing. Winter is not the 'cause' of summer, nor day of night. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* is an anthropomorphism on the analogy of human purposive action. For an automatist it is absurd. Causation, used in its correct sense, is precisely what Bergson calls 'creative evolution,' and it does require la *durée*, as he says. But this constant operation of creative force may take place without any 'freedom' on the part of that which exhibits its effects. A watch is no more free when we push the hands about than when we leave it to keep its own time. Nor does Bergson even succeed in proving that a psychical series, in 'real Time,' is irreversible. He only makes it discontinuous, whether we read it backwards or forwards, for whenever a 'new' element is admitted, there is a breach of complete continuity. Lastly, he does not prove that it is unpredictable, but only that it is unpredictable by the laws which govern inorganic matter. What he calls creative evolution may be the orderly development of psychical or spiritual law, which a superior being could predict as the astronomer predicts an eclipse. In this case, the argument for free will falls to the ground, if we take free will to mean a real 'contingency in the heart of things,' to use a phrase of Dr. James Ward. Bergson rejects teleology, and therefore finalistic determinism; but he cannot get rid of either. If, with the Neoplatonists, we hold that 'Divine necessity coincides with Divine will,' we shall infer that we win freedom in proportion as we enter into the life of God, and make His will our will. Our freedom will then be our emancipation from our fancied subjection to the law of sin and death.

It seems more than probable that there is no radical difference between the laws which determine the sequence of events in the organic and in the inorganic worlds; but that as we rise to the higher forms of being the laws become more and more complex and therefore apparently irregular in their working. Human character is the most complex of all, and the most obviously ungeometrical. But only a superhuman intelligence could say whether there is any real indétermination in these manifestations. We have rejected the notion that one event is the cause of another. The cause of any event is the will of a spiritual being, of a mind which has willed it to happen in a certain series.

That will is certainly not less free if it acts uniformly, linking events together as stages in a predetermined action. Whether that will is human or superhuman is another question. For Plotinus, the will is that of the World-Soul, and individual Souls are free in proportion as they understand and obey the laws which the World-Soul has ordained alike for them and their environment. The World-Soul itself is the instrument of Spirit energising through it as the supreme will.

The 'idealistic reaction against Science' (the title of Aliotta's book) has made great play with the irregularities of concrete Nature, which only approximates 'on the average' to the 'diagrams' of science. It is argued that Nature 'really is' irregular and unaccountable, the 'laws of Nature' being only convenient methodological assumptions, indispensable for the special work of science. Plotinus would say that the laws are certainly the work of Soul, but that Nature is so too. Whatever may be the explanation of apparent disorders in Nature, no Platonist can observe with glee that the world does not seem to him to be a perfect cosmos. He may need a caution against 'mathematicising Nature'; but not against attempting to find universal law in the natural world. The synthesising labour to which he is always impelled is no mere 'symbolism': it is the pathway to reality. It is thus that in the psychical world he discovers the truth of teleology, and in the spiritual world the eternal fountains of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. It may be suggested that the real object of that branch of science which deals with inorganic nature, is to discover the *inner meaning of what seems to us unconscious activity*. This is a very different thing from drawing diagrams.

Time for Plotinus is *the form of willed change*. Every distinct idea Yonder becomes a finite purpose Here. Every attribute of God's essence becomes an activity of His existence. The time-process is not the necessary form of the self-evolution of God; it is the product of His free but necessary creative activity. But it is not necessary to suppose that in inorganic nature God has wound up the clock and left it to itself, while in living beings new interventions take place. Rather, the same power which slumbers in the stone and dreams in the flower, awakes in the human soul. The assumption that regularity is a sign of undirected movement is one of the strangest and most

obstinate of human prejudices. It is only a false idea of causation that makes us think that orderly evolution is not real change. It is the same prejudice that makes men say that 'God does nothing' because they cannot distinguish any particular event as an 'act of God.'

Variation and heredity are both facts, both names for unknown laws. Why should one be more 'spiritual' than the other; and why should we confound freedom with the unpredictable? We have no wish to reduce even inorganic evolution to the terms of pure mathematics. In fact, no natural process does exhibit this exactness. Nature always 'wobbles' a little, as any table of vital or meteorological statistics shows. But irregularity is not a sign of higher or freer life. On the contrary, the precision of the mathematical sciences seemed to Plato and many of his school the very type of the spiritual order. But there is a profound truth in the saying of Proclus that only the highest and lowest things are simple, while all between is complex. Mathematical truth may perhaps be compared to an empty outline of the rich glory of the spiritual world. It is an abstract and colourless presentation of supratemporal reality. With the concrete individual there enters not only 'a splitting up' (as Plotinus says) of spiritual truth, but some apparent dislocation of law—of mechanical law in the physical world, of psychical law in the soul-world. This dislocation seems relatively slight in the material world, just because that world has so little life; it is more marked in the region of Soul, because it is in this region that life is most fully revealed as a struggle. But we do not know what a mechanical psychical life would be; we have no scales to weigh the imponderable.

Time, for Plotinus, is not merely the 'measure of the impermanence of the imperfect'; it is the measure of a definite finite activity directed to some end beyond itself. This remarkable statement proves that Plotinus regards Time as a teleological category. What is real in Time is the potentiality of qualitative change. 'Movement by itself does not need Time.' There is movement in the spiritual world, but no qualitative change. Continuous regular motion is a form of stability. Time is needed when the superior principle desires to make something 'according to the pattern showed in the mount.' Because this act of creation is willed, and willed as a process, there must be an interval between the inception and conclusion of the process. This interval is Time.

Past and Future

In what sense are the distinctions of past and future real? Plotinus says that temporal differences are images of differences in order or arrangement (*τάξι*) Yonder. What is unreal in past and future is not the relation which under the form of Time appears as anteriority and posteriority, but the envisagement of temporal events from an imaginary point, 'the present,' within the process. Anterior and posterior events are, in their positions and not out of them, constituent parts of the individual fact to which they belong. Past and present are illusory ideas. Real things do not come into being, nor pass out of being; it is we who are moving through Time, as the traveller in an express train sees trees and hedges hurrying past his field of vision. But is this a legitimate comparison? It runs counter to a deep-seated instinct, that Time and Space are not like each other. We readily grant that the 'not here' is as real as the 'here'; but it is difficult for us to think of the past and future as being no less real than the present. Consider this curious difference. We none of us want to be ubiquitous; but we do wish to be immortal. What is the ground of this difference? One reason may be that we can move voluntarily in Space, but not in Time. The movement of Time carries us all with it, like the movement of the earth round the sun. There is also a mysterious and deeply important difference between the two tracts that lie behind and before the moment which we call the present. We are blind on one side. The apparent contingency and uncertainty of all that lies ahead of us seems to be the source of our ideas of cause, purpose, and freedom. If the future lay open before us, it is difficult to see how we could have these ideas, which, could never arise from a contemplation of coexistence. Unless, then, our ideas of cause, purpose, and freedom are illusory, futurity must indicate something more than a blind spot in our mental vision. This ignorance must be a necessary condition of soul-life. We must however be careful not to exaggerate the difference between our knowledge of the past and our ignorance of the future. Very much of the past is as completely lost to us as the future; and the whole would be lost but for the mysterious faculty of memory. What memory does for us with regard to the past, knowledge of natural law does for us with regard to the future. We do know many things that have not yet happened. But if we are to take Plotinus as our guide, we must remember

that the Soul is the creator of the phenomenal world and the time-process, and that this creation is a continuous act, being the activity which constitutes the out-going life of the Soul. From this, the specifically human point of view, there is a real generic difference between the 'not yet' and the 'no longer,' and we cannot regard them as homogeneous parts of a landscape which we traverse as passive spectators. The will, of which Time is the form, has a wholly different relation to the future from that which it has to the past. In looking back, the will confesses its impotence; in looking forward it finds its scope and *raison d'être*. It is because psychical reality is will, not memory, that we regard the past as 'done with.' Memory indeed proves that our consciousness of a moving present, perpetually passing out of existence, is an illusion. It is a partial knowledge, limited by the needs of our activity. Like all else, it indicates that the Soul has 'come down' on a temporary adventure. But this attitude of the will is not something to be merely left behind when we climb from Soul to Spirit. In the life of Spirit, Time is transcended; but the Eternity in which Spirit moves and has its being is not an arrested and fixed present moment, truncated of its living relations to past and future; it is a fuller and richer life in which all meanings are completely expressed, all relations acknowledged. The Soul must take its Time-experience up with it to the threshold of Eternity; it will leave nothing behind as it crosses the threshold. The life of the Soul in its higher aspect is a contemplation of Spirit. That is to say, all real psychical ends belong to the spiritual world. Ends are striven for in Time, but there can be no ends in Time, which swallows its own children.

From the point of view of practical religion it makes a great difference whether we regard the phenomenal world as a mere polarisation of a timeless and changeless reality, or whether we hold that its being is radically teleological. The former doctrine deprives Time of all existence and all value. Philosophers of this school care nothing for history. The general tendency of Indian thought has been in this direction, in strong contrast with the Iranian and Hebrew religions, in which the revelation of God is sought from history, with which accordingly the sacred books of the Jewish people are largely occupied. It makes a great difference whether we make it our aim to understand reality or to help in making it. The religious genius, it is true, soon

learns both that the truths of life can only be learned by practising them, and that on the other hand 'good works' without 'faith' are dead. But the caricatures of the two doctrines are very different. On one side we have the pushing, hustling European or American man of business, immersed in irrational activities which make him no wiser and the world no better; and on the other the vacuous Indian contemplative, whose existence is a living death, steeped in dull torpor. Christianity has combined, without fully reconciling, the two views about Time. But in the countries of the West it has lost much of its idealistic element, through the vulgar conception of heaven as a fairy-land existence in Time and Place. To this error, and not to any essential part of Christian doctrine, is to be attributed the spurious 'otherworldliness' which disparages or denies the values of the world in which we live. To a similar error is also due the secularist apocalyptic which seeks encouragement and inspiration by 'making heavy drafts upon the future,' a method fatal to real insight and just appreciation of values. The final satisfaction of human hopes within the temporal series is for ever impossible.

The Platonic tradition leaned to the Indian view of existence rather than to the Hebraic. Plato was consciously leading a reaction against the disintegrating tendencies of his age. His thought was decidedly more Oriental than that of Plotinus, who had Aristotle and the Stoics to keep him a good European. The view of Time as the form of the Will is certainly to be found in the *Enneads*, though it is less insisted on than a modern reader would desire. Metaphysically, Plotinus' doctrine of Time anticipates some of the best thought of our own age, and is still highly instructive.

Cosmology

We must not expect to find in Plotinus any contributions to natural science. He does not even choose well among the discoveries, some of them very brilliant, which earlier philosophers had made about the constitution of the universe. Only here and there we find valuable suggestions, as when he says that though the substance of the stars is in perpetual flux, this does not impair their immortality, because all the flux goes on *within* the universe, and the

sum-total of the material is never either augmented or diminished. I have already said that modern physics seems to be approximating to the Plotinian doctrine of Matter. And the Greek theory of recurring cycles is, as I shall show presently, much more in accordance with what we know about the history of the heavenly bodies than the utterly unscientific notion of an automatic 'law of progress,' that strange will-o'-the-wisp of nineteenth-century thought. Other lucky hits might perhaps be found; but on the whole the chapters which deal with cosmology are among the least valuable in the *Enneads*.

Plotinus assumes that the sublime reconciliation of change and permanence, which is found in the spiritual world, must have its reflexion in the phenomenal world. No better symbol of this rest-in-motion could be found than a body revolving round a fixed centre, and at the same time rotating round its own axis. The perfection of the spiritual world is symbolised in the lower order by a closed system of movements which repeats itself in successive æons. The underlying unity of all phenomena binds the whole of nature together in a subtle web of occult sympathies. The recognition of these sympathies gives a certain justification to the lore of astrology and natural magic, which Plotinus cannot decisively repudiate, though he dislikes and distrusts it. When Neoplatonism tried to become a popular religion, as it did in the fourth century, a flood of superstition entered by this door, which Plotinus would fain have kept closed, though not locked.

Fate of the World

Plotinus believed that the universe is eternal, in the sense that it had no temporal beginning and will have no temporal ending. He cannot allow that the Ideas at one time existed apart from Matter and then entered into it. Plutarch indeed tried to defend such a theory from the *Timæus*, but in so doing he deserted the orthodox Platonic tradition. Longinus, who had a controversy with Plotinus, did not hold this theory. He only argued that the Divine Mind contemplates the Ideas as existing objectively over against itself, Plotinus, as we shall see, makes Spirit and the Spiritual World (Mind and the Ideas) inseparable and interdependent.

The doctrine of the eternity of the universe is compatible with the view that every individual in it perishes, the type alone persisting and renewing itself in successive individuals. Plotinus however asserts positively that there are Ideas of individuals; and since the phenomenal world derives whatever reality it has from the Ideas, this is conclusive. Individuality is a fact in the real world, and therefore indestructible. 'Nothing that really is can ever perish' (*οὐδ' ἂν ἀπολίται τῶν ὄντων*).

The world-order evolves regularly till the end of an astronomical cycle, and then the whole process is repeated, perhaps exactly. When all the seminal Logoi have produced individuals, according to the plan of the Universal Soul, a new world-order will begin. Thus the history of the Universe consists of an infinite number of vast but finite schemes, which have, each of them, a beginning, middle, and end. This view is in every way far superior to the loose theories of perpetual progress which are so popular in modern Europe and America. An infinite purpose is a contradiction in terms. Such a purpose could never have been formed, and could never be accomplished. There may be a single purpose—hardly 'an increasing purpose,' as Tennyson puts it in a well-known line—in the present world-order taken as a whole; but only on condition of our admitting that the present world-order had a beginning and will have an end. Physical science of course is well aware of the fate in store for this planet. The achievements of humanity will one day be wiped off the slate. They will be as completely obliterated as a child's sand-castles by the next high-tide; they will vanish and 'leave not a wrack behind.' So our modern apocalyptists, who, rejecting belief in a spiritual world, project their ideals into an unending terrestrial future, suffer shipwreck both in philosophy and science. The ancient doctrine of alternate integration and dissociation is alone tenable; and man must find consolation for the inevitable fate of his species either nowhere or in a heaven where all values are preserved eternally.

The belief in recurring cycles belongs to Asia as well as to Europe. 'In India there was the mythical dream of vast chronological cycles, each divisible into four epochs, until a new *mahá-yuga* or great cycle begins.' The old Persian religion encouraged the hope that evil would not last for ever, but never connected this optimism with any doctrine of gradual progress. In Hesiod

there is no mention of cycles: he traces a gradual decline through the ages of gold, silver, brass, and iron, only intercalating the *heroic age* (the legends of which were too strong for his theory) between the last two. The evolution of man out of lower forms was taught by Empedocles; his advance from bestial savagery by Æschylus in the *Prometheus Vincetus*, and by Euripides. The doctrine of cycles is part of Orphism, and of Stoicism. ‘The Stoics,’ says Nemesius, ‘taught that at fixed periods of time a burning and destruction of all things takes place, and the world returns to the same shape that it had before; and that the restoration happens not once, but often, the same things being restored an infinite number of times.’ Lucretius, in some of the finest lines of his poem, predicts the final destruction of the present world-order:—

*Una dies dabit exitio, multosque per annos
Sustentata ruet moles et machina mundi.’*

Virgil thinks that the Golden Age was ended that man might work out his own salvation. Pliny leans to the superstition of the nineteenth century. ‘We must firmly trust that the ages go on continuously improving.’

It is perhaps not easy to reconcile the theory of recurring cycles, every phase of which is a necessary part of the universal order, like the alternate opening and shutting of valves in the human body, with the doctrine that the Soul has sinned in coming down into the world of change. I shall argue in the next chapter that this latter doctrine has an insecure place in the system of Plotinus, and was never accepted by him whole-heartedly. Historically, the two doctrines had separate origins, the former belonging to what Mr. Cornford calls the Dionysiac tradition, the latter to the Orphic. They were first brought together by Parmenides. Aristotle confines the cyclic mutation to the history of the earth and mankind, thus falling back behind Plato, and still more behind Heracleitus and Empedocles.

Categories of the World of Appearance

The enquiry into the categories, initiated by the Pythagoreans, was first prosecuted in detail by Aristotle. It also held an important place in the writings of the Stoical school. In Plotinus we find a good deal of space given to the subject. The first three books of the Sixth Ennead, and the sixth of the Second, are devoted to it; and several discussions in other parts of his work are based upon these classifications. Zeller, differing from Steinhart, thinks that the doctrine of categories has but little influence upon the philosophy of Plotinus, in spite of the large space allotted to it in the Enneads. My own impression is that Plotinus is hampered, as in some other cases, by the Platonic tradition, which obliged him to accept, not the Aristotelian list, but the five categories of the intelligible world which are laid down in the *Sophist* of Plato—*ὄν, στάσις, κίνησις ταυτότητος* and *τρότης*. The category of 'Being' is, as I shall hope to show, unsatisfactory. It needs to be resolved into Thought and its Object, in order to bring it into line with the two pairs of inseparable opposites or correlatives which follow as the other categories of the spiritual world. Plotinus in reality sees this quite clearly, and sometimes gives us six categories of the spiritual; but the Platonic classification introduces some confusion into the categories of the World of Sense, which we have now to consider. He is concerned to prove that the categories of the spiritual world are not applicable to the world of phenomena, but that at the same time the two run parallel to each other, so that the names of the spiritual categories may be used, in an incorrect sense, of the phenomenal world. In the spiritual world, Thought and its Object, Stability and Movement, Identity and Difference, are not mutually exclusive: they are united in the harmony of eternal life. In the world of appearance this unity is broken up by a want of complete correspondence between Thought and its Object, caused by the fact that neither Thought nor its Object is purely real and true. The following extract will make it clear in what manner, and with what hesitation, Plotinus lays down his categories of the phenomenal world.

'Let us first speak of what is called Reality (or Being) here below. We must recognise that the corporeal nature can only be called Reality in an incorrect sense, or perhaps it should not be called Reality at all, since it is in perpetual

flux; the word Generation would be more appropriate... We may also distinguish in bodies, on the one side Matter, on the other the Form impressed upon Matter, and make a category of each of these taken separately, or we may unite them in the same category, calling it, incorrectly, Reality, or generation.' (Thus he proposes to make of Matter and Form one category in the phenomenal world, just as Thought and its Object are combined in the intelligible or spiritual category of Real Being.) 'But what can there be in common between Matter and Form? And how can Matter be a category, and what would this category contain? What distinctions are there within it? And in what category shall we place the composite of Matter and Form? Matter and Form are the constituent elements of corporeal Being; but neither of them is Body; can we place them in the same category as the composite, Body? But though we must abandon the attempt to identify the categories of the phenomenal with those of the spiritual world, we may admit analogous divisions. Instead of spiritual Being, we have here below, Matter; instead of spiritual Movement, we have Form, which gives to Matter life and perfection; instead of spiritual Stability, the Inertia of Matter; instead of Identity, Resemblance 'instead, of Difference Unlikeness. Matter, however, neither receives nor possesses Form as its life or proper activity; on the contrary, Form introduces itself into Matter from outside. Further, while in the spiritual world Form is essentially activity and movement, in the sensible world Movement is something strange and accidental. Far from being Movement, the Form impressed upon Matter communicates to it rather Stability and immobility; for the Form determines Matter, which is naturally undetermined. In the spiritual world, Identity and Difference apply to one and the same Real Being, at once identical and different. But here a Being is different only adventitiously. As for Stability, how can we attribute it to Matter, which is constantly taking different forms from outside? We must therefore abandon this division. What classification then shall we adopt? We have first Matter, then Form, then the Composite of these two, and finally the things which belong to these three and are affirmed of them, whether as attributes or as accidents; and among accidents, some are contained in things, others contain them; some are activities of them, others passive states, others again consequences.' He goes on to say that the class of 'accidents' includes

Time and Place, Quality and Quantity. Then he decides to include Form, Matter, and the Composite in one category, that of 'Reality incorrectly so called' (*ἁμῶνυμος οὐσία*), and to add, as further categories, Relation, Quality, Quantity, Time, Place, Movement.

We need not follow further an argument which is one of the most obscure and least attractive parts of the *Enneads*. What is most necessary to remember is that while in the eternal world Thought and its Object, Stability and Movement, Identity and Difference, are taken up into a higher unity, in the world of our ordinary experience there are unsolved contradictions, which proceed from the fact that the Soul cannot create anything better than an imperfect copy of spiritual reality.

Relations of the 'Two Worlds'

Plotinus speaks so often of 'Here' and 'Yonder,' as if they were two countries, that we can hardly avoid accepting the ordinary language which has so often led critics of the Neoplatonists to accuse them of teaching a rather crude dualism. But strictly there is only one real world—the spiritual world or *κόσμος νοητός*. The world of sense has not only a lower value; it has a lower degree of reality. The difficulty for a modern philosopher is to decide whether Plotinus meant us to regard the world of sense as merely our imperfect view of the world of Spirit, or whether it is, from the point of view of perfect knowledge, an actually existing second world. In order to answer this question, we must remember that there is only one sharp line intersecting the field of experience—that which divides things which have *οὐσία*, Real Being, from those which have it not. The kingdom of *οὐσία* includes Soul, but nothing lower than Soul. Accordingly, the phenomenal world, which is created by Soul, is not in itself real. Nevertheless, it is a necessary product of Soul, and without it none of the Divine principles would be knowable for what they are. Plotinus is very emphatic about this. Without the phenomenal world, the spiritual world would not be *ἐνργία*; it would have been hidden. If the Soul's potency or potentiality (*δύναμις*) were unmanifested, the Soul would be non-existent (*οὐκ οὔσα*), not being really existent (*ὄντως οὔσα*).

Still more strongly, in a passage of supreme importance for the right understanding of Plotinus, we read: 'It is necessary that each principle should give of itself to another; the Good would not be Good, nor Spirit Spirit, nor Soul Soul, if nothing lived dependent on the first life.' It is the nature of each principle in the hierarchy to create something which, though necessarily inferior to its creator, yet reflects faithfully, so far as is possible in an imperfect medium, not its creator, but the principle next above its creator, the ideal towards which the gaze of its creator, even in the moment of creating, is turned. Thus all grades of life are bound in 'a golden chain about the feet of God.' But of what nature is the necessity which impels each principle to create? To suppose that spiritual existences, the Divine Ideas, have to bathe in the flowing river of Time before they can take their place in the world of perfect and eternal Being, would be to misunderstand Plotinus. The higher does not need the lower; God does not need the world; though without it His character would have been 'hidden.' The necessity lies in the inner nature of all which derives its being from the One who is also the Good. Proclus says that God created the world by his goodness, his will, and his providence, a trinity in unity (*νοιδῆς τριάς*) of motives. These correspond to the three attributes which he ascribes to Spirit—Being, Power, Activity. The Soul descends into the phenomenal world 'because it desires to imitate the providence of the gods.' Another statement, which is found in Plato, is that it is always *love* which is the motive in creation. But this love is not love for the creature which is to be created, but the love which the creative principle feels for what is above itself. This longing reproduces, as it were, an image of its object. Plotinus is also fond of two metaphors to represent the relation between the higher and the lower worlds. He speaks of the higher principle 'as it were overflowing'; and he speaks of a luminary pouring forth its light. He prefers the latter image because, in accordance with the science of his day, he believed that the sun loses nothing of its own heat and light by shining upon the world, and he wishes to insist that the higher principle loses nothing of its own substance or power by creating. The activity of the higher principle in creating is always an activity outside itself. Now there are philosophers who deny that such activity is possible, even in the spiritual and psychical spheres. Nothing, they say, can be done without a reaction on the agent. If

they are right, the whole philosophy of Plotinus falls to the ground. For his system depends entirely on the assumption that Spirit can act upon Soul, and Soul upon Matter, without losing anything in the process. The relations between higher and lower are one-sided. The lower needs the higher; the higher is complete without the lower. The higher possesses certain qualities which necessarily impel it to creative activity, and it is therefore impossible that it should live without creating. But the world is the manifestation of God's character, not a constituent of His existence. The Divine power is To deny this is surely to destroy not only Platonism, but all theism. The analogy of mechanical laws, which preclude any possibility of one-sided activity, need no longer frighten us. Spiritual life is not subject to these laws.

The world of sense, then, is created by Soul after the pattern shown her by Spirit. But it is no coherent, consistent world, with which we are dealing in this lecture. It is a construction of superficial experience, a rough-and-ready synthesis based on very imperfect data. The world of sense must not be confused with the world described by natural science. This latter is an attempt to interpret the universe as a self-consistent harmonious system or law. Its categories are quantitative only, and a rigorous application of its principles would reduce the world to pure mathematics. The quantities with which it deals are hypothetical, since the individual concrete never absolutely conforms to type. In practice, of course, the scientist cannot refrain from assigning values, though in doing so he is transgressing the limits which he laid down for himself. But the world of common experience is not the world of natural science. It is a blurred and confused picture of the spiritual world, distorted in innumerable ways by defects in the organ of perception, and split up by the very conditions of Soul-life into Here and There, Past and Future. But for all this, it is a glorious vision of the eternal realities. There is nothing 'Yonder' which cannot be found 'Here.' And all things Here that have *ἴδῃ*—that is to say, that represent some thought in the Divine mind, have a secure abiding-place Yonder. It is only things 'contrary to nature' that have no place in the eternal world. These have a place in reality only when they are completely transformed into parts of a larger scheme.

Consequently, Plotinus has no sympathy with the half-Christian Gnostics who disparage this beautiful world and hand it over to the evil principle. In reply to the suggestion that the world was created through a lapse of the Universal Soul, he says: 'We affirm that the Soul created the world, not because it looked downward, but because it did not look downward. In order to look downward, the Soul must have forgotten the spiritual world; but if it has forgotten it, how can it create the world? Where could it find its pattern, except from what it saw yonder? But if it remembers the spiritual world while creating, it does not look downwards at all... We must not allow that the world is ill made, because it contains much that is disagreeable. That would be to claim too great a perfection for the sensible world and to confound it with the spiritual world of which it is only the image. But could there be a more beautiful image? Could there be a better fire than ours, after the fire yonder? Could one conceive a better earth than this, after the earth yonder? Could there be a more perfect sphere, better ordered in its movements, after the revolution of the spiritual world? After the sun that is yonder, what sun could we have other than the one that we see?' In the same book he says indignantly, 'Do not suppose that a man becomes good by despising the gods, the world, and all the beauties that are in it. They [the Gnostics] have no right to profess respect for the gods of the world above. When we love a person, we love all that belongs to him; we extend to the children the affection which we feel for the father. Now every Soul is a daughter of the Father in heaven. How can this world, with the gods which it contains, be separated from the spiritual world? Those who despise what is so nearly akin to the spiritual world, prove that they know nothing of the spiritual world, except in name.' In another place he says that this world is worthy of its Author, complete, beautiful, and harmonious. Those who find fault with it make the mistake of considering it piecemeal, There are no doubt minor defects in it; but 'we do not take Thersites as the type of the human race.' For anyone who has seen anything of the beauty of the spiritual world, this world is full of echoes of that beauty, full of order, harmony, and grace. And the more we can train ourselves to take large and comprehensive views of this world, disregarding petty details, the more we shall be convinced of its divine origin. What is most real in this world is that which reflects the purpose, meaning, and plan

which called it into being. By fixing our attention on this, we are taking the only path by which anything in heaven or earth can be understood, that is to say, by viewing it in its relation to what is next above it. So the broken lights of the Divine which irradiate this world of ours will flow together; and in rising above the flux of changing phenomena we shall leave nothing behind. Sun, stars, and all that is good and beautiful 'here below' exist also 'yonder.' All things on earth were in heaven; 'for whence else could they have come?' 'Spirit is the first lawgiver, or rather the law of all being.'

We must be content to acquiesce in the multiplicity, change, and strife which are conditions of existence in such a world as that which we inhabit. We recognise these conditions as imperfect, just because we are not debarred from knowledge of the perfect. Thus the flaws which we justly observe in the world of Time and Space are themselves evidence that the Soul has her home in another and a higher sphere.

The Soul

THE idea of 'Soul,' or 'Life,' may have had its source in primitive religion—'animism.' 'Nature,' for the Ionians, was 'a material continuum charged with vital force.' They did not at first distinguish mechanical motion from vital activity. Aristotle's comment on the doctrines of Soul in early philosophy is worth quoting. 'Those who have concentrated their attention on the fact that what is animate is in motion have regarded Soul as that which is most capable of movement: those who have directed their observations to the fact that the Soul knows and perceives things existing, identify Soul with the elementary principles of all existence, whether they recognise a plurality of these or only one. Thus Empedocles makes Soul to be compounded of all the elements, and at the same time considers each of these to be a Soul. His words are as follows:—

*Earth we perceive by earth, and man knoweth water by water,
Air the divine by air, by fire sees fire the destroyer,
Love he beholds by love, by discord horrible discord.*

So Plato in the *Timaeus* constructs Soul out of the elements. Like is known by like, he maintains, and the objects of knowledge are composed of the elements of existence... While, however, thinkers agree in reducing the Soul to elements or principles, they differ as regards the name and number of the principles; some make them corporeal, others incorporeal; some reduce them to one, others regard them as more in number... Democritus regarded the Soul as identical with Mind (*νοῦς*), which belongs to the class of primary and indivisible bodies, and possesses the faculty of movement... Anaxagoras sometimes seems to distinguish Soul and Mind, but he really identifies them, except that he makes Mind the principle of all things... Heracleitus also identifies the Soul with his principle in describing it as the "fiery process" out of which he derives other existing things, his ground being that it is that which is least corporeal and in constant movement... Thus with the exception of the earth all the elements have gained a vote.'

The Orphics were the first to teach that the Soul of man is 'fallen'; it is in prison until the end of the cosmic year of ten thousand solar years. Till then, it

is 'an exile from God and a wanderer.' It retains its individuality (this is distinctive of Orphism) through all its transmigrations. The Pythagoreans held to this doctrine of a multitude of immortal souls, thus breaking up the older doctrine that 'Soul' generically is the active power or manifestation of one spiritual Being. One of the main problems of the later Greek philosophy was to preserve the truth of human personality, thus, rather late, recognised, without sacrificing the right to believe in Divine immanence and in the ultimate unity of all the creatures in God. The doctrine which insisted on the individuality and personal responsibility of the human Soul contained a theodicy; for, as Empedocles and Pindar before him taught, the Soul is in prison because it sinned—stained itself with blood, or 'followed strife,' or committed perjury—in an earlier state of existence. If love and strife are the contending principles which constitute the life of the immortal Soul, sin must be the following of strife, and its punishment the rupture of the bond of love which unites souls with each other and with God. The eating of flesh, forbidden by the Orphics, was a kind of sacrament of strife, an acceptance of the sad law that creatures must live by killing one another. The flesh itself, in which we live our outer lives, is an 'alien garment,' the sign that we are divided from one another. When 'loving-kindness burns like a fire,' we are on the way to conquer strife by love, and the Soul may look for an end to its wandering in the wilderness. Thoughts like these help to reconcile panentheism (Divine immanence) with belief in the distinct soul-life of human individuals.

Plotinus thus inherited a double tradition about the nature of Soul. Some of his predecessors had almost identified it with Mind or Spirit; that is to say, they made Soul the power of God in the world, a spiritual energy like that ascribed to 'Wisdom' in late Jewish literature. Others had thought not of Soul but of Souls, and had elaborated a semi-mythical doctrine of the fall of the Soul from its heavenly home, and of its return thither. Philosophy was attempting to combine two very different theories, just as Christianity tried to find room for the very different religious ideas of Judaism and Hellenism. From the point of view of the rigorous logician and metaphysician, this kind of syncretism can hardly escape the charge of halting between two opinions; but the attempt to do justice to two legitimate views of the world, and to

bring them together, is a worthy task for a philosopher. In matters of religion especially, it is better to leave some ragged edges than to purchase consistency by onesidedness.

The Soul is in the centre, not at the summit, of Plotinus' philosophy. It stands midway between the phenomenal world, of which it is the principle, and the world of Spirit, which is its principle. But the Soul is not only an intermediary between appearance and reality. It is the point where all converging and diverging lines meet; 'it binds extremes together,' and it is in vital correspondence with every region to which these lines lead. Within the Soul all metaphysical principles are represented. It touches every grade in the hierarchies of value and of existence, from the super-essential Absolute to the infra-essential Matter. It has its own centre, a life proper to itself; but it can expand infinitely in every direction without ceasing to be itself. The Soul is a microcosm; as Aristotle says, 'the Soul is the real world.' There is a sense in which each of us is the spiritual world; and we also share the being of the universal Soul. The Soul is the last Logos of the spiritual world, and the first of the phenomenal world, and is thus in vital connexion with both. To maintain this connexion by constant movement is part of its nature.

No limit has been set to its possible expansion. When the Soul raises itself to the realm of Spirit, 'it will see God and itself and the All; it will not at first see itself as the All, but being unable to find a stopping-place, to fix its own limits and determine where it ceases to be itself, it will give up the attempt to distinguish itself from the universal Being, and will arrive at the All without change of place, abiding there, where the All has its home.'

In modern idealism the Soul or self-conscious self tends to be the fixed centre, round which all revolves. In Plotinus it is the wanderer of the metaphysical world. The life which we know in our external experience is not the Soul's life. The Soul is in truth a stranger among the things of sense. It realises itself by turning towards its principle, and away from its own creations, which none the less are good and necessary. But the world of sense is, as it were, only the shadow of Soul cast by the sun of Spirit; and the more the Soul lives in the light of Spirit, 'turned towards' that which is above itself, the more creative it becomes, though its work is done with its back turned.

Soul is the offspring of Spirit,' which, having perfect life, must necessarily procreate and not be barren. It is an energy thrown off by Spirit. As an image of Spirit, it resembles its principle closely. But while on one side it is closely attached to Spirit, of which it is the effluence, on the other it touches the phenomenal world. Soul is still a part of the Divine world, though the lowest part. 'It is not Matter and Form, but Form only, and power, and energy second to that of Spirit.' Soul is eternal and timeless. It may be compared to a moving circle round the One, while Spirit is an unmoving circle. Soul is 'indivisible even when it is divided; for it is all in all and all in every part.' Individual souls are Logoi of Spirits, more evolved (*ἐξίλιγμένα*), that is to say, less fully unified, than Spirits. It is only bodies, not souls, that are in space, and subject to the mutual exclusive-ness and incompenetrability of spatial existence. Soul is distinguished from Spirit not by being localised, but, among other things, by the presence of unfulfilled *desire* in Soul, Spirit being free from all desires. Soul, as an activity proceeding from Spirit, is in labour to create after the pattern which it saw in Spirit, and from this desire 'the whole world that we know arose and took its shapes.' Soul is separated from Spirit as word from thought, as activity from power, as manifestation from essence. It is of the nature of Soul to look both up and down, and so to be the intermediary between Spirit and the world that we know. The Soul has its proper place in this intermediate sphere.

The Universal Soul

The Third Person in the Neoplatonic Trinity is not the aggregate of individual Souls, the 'world of spirits' which some modern philosophers have made the centre of their systems, but 'the Soul of the All.' To this World-Soul Plotinus assigns attributes which bring it very near to the nature of Spirit. The World-Soul is exalted above Time and Space; it remains itself at rest while it vivifies the world and gives it all the being that it has. The World-Soul is not in the world; rather the World is in it, embraced by it and moulded by it.

The individual Soul can understand itself only by contemplating the universal Soul. The passage in which Plotinus urges us to this holy quest is one of the

finest in the *Enneads*. Part of it is familiar to thousands who have never read Plotinus, because it has been closely imitated by St. Augustine in a famous chapter of his *Confessions*. 'The Soul ought first to examine its own nature to know whether it has the faculty of contemplating spiritual things, and whether it has indeed an eye wherewith to see them, and if it ought to embark on the quest. If the spiritual world is foreign to it, what is the use of trying? But if there is a kinship between us and it, we both can and ought to find it. First then let every Soul consider that it is the universal Soul which created all things, breathing into them the breath of life—into all living things which are on earth, in the air, and in the sea, and the Divine stars in heaven, the sun, and the great firmament itself. The Soul sets them in their order and directs their motions, keeping itself apart from the things which it orders and moves and causes to live. The Soul must be more honourable than they, since they are born and perish as the Soul grants them life and leaves them; but the Soul lives for ever and never ceases to be itself. But how is life imparted, in the whole and in individuals? The Great Soul must be contemplated by another Soul, itself no small thing, but one that makes itself worthy to contemplate the Great Soul by ridding itself, through quiet recollection, of deceit and of all that bewitches vulgar souls. For it let all be quiet; not only the body which encompasses it, and the tumult of the senses; but let all its environment be at peace. Let the earth be quiet and the sea and air, and the heaven itself waiting. Let it observe how the Soul flows in from all sides into the resting world, pours itself into it, penetrates it and illumines it. Even as the bright beams of the sun enlighten a dark cloud and give it a golden border, so the Soul when it enters into the body of the heaven gives it life and immortality and awakens it from sleep. So the world, guided in an eternal movement by the Soul which directs it with intelligence, becomes a living and blessed being; and the heaven, after the Soul has made it her habitation, becomes a thing of worth, after being, before the advent of the Soul, a dead body, mere earth and water, or rather darkness of Matter and no thing, 'hated by the gods,' as the poet says. The power and nature of the Soul are revealed still more clearly, if we consider how it encompasses and guides the heaven by its own will. It gives itself to every point in this vast body, and vouchsafes its being to every part, great and small, though these parts are divided in space

and manner of disposition, and though some are opposed to each other, others dependent on each other. But the Soul is not divided, nor does it split up in order to give life to each individual. All things live by the Soul in its entirety; it is all present everywhere, like the Father which begat it, both in its unity and in its universality. The heaven, vast and various as it is, is one by the power of the Soul, and by it is this universe of ours Divine. The sun too is Divine, being the abode of Soul, and so are the stars; and we ourselves, if we are worth anything, are so on account of the Soul; for 'a dead corpse is viler than dung.' But if it is to the Soul that the gods owe their divinity, the Soul itself must be a God higher than the gods. Now our Soul is of one form with the universal Soul; and if you remove from it all that is adventitious, and consider it in its state of purity, you will see how precious the essence of the Soul is, far more precious than anything bodily... Since then the Soul is so precious and Divine a thing, be persuaded that by it thou canst attain to God; with it raise thyself to Him. Be sure that thou wilt not have to go far afield; there is not much between. Take as thy guide in the ascent that which is more Divine than this Divine—I mean that part of the Soul which is next neighbour to that which is above, after which and through which the Soul exists. For although the Soul is such a thing as our argument has shown, a thing in itself, it is an image of Spirit. As the Logos which is manifested outwardly is an image of the Logos in the Soul, so the Soul itself is a Logos of Spirit, and is the whole activity by which it projects life into the substance of another... Being then derived from Spirit, the Soul is spiritual, and its Spirit is manifested in the discursive reason. The Soul owes its perfecting to Spirit, as it owes its existence—a son less perfect than his father. Its substance proceeds from Spirit... and when it looks upon Spirit, it has within itself, and as its own, what it sees and does. These are, indeed, the only activities of the Soul, properly speaking, which it performs spiritually and itself; the inferior operations come from elsewhere and are rather affections of the Soul which experiences them. Spirit then makes Soul more Divine, both by being its father and by its presence. There is nothing between them except that which distinguishes them... namely, that the Spirit is Form and imparts, the Soul receives from it. But even the Matter of Spirit is beautiful and of spiritual form and simple like Spirit.'

The Universal Soul as Creator

The life of the world (*ἡ τοῦ κόσμου ζωή*) is an energy of Soul, having its ruling principle within itself. It does not reason or seek what it ought to do, for 'it has already been discovered and ordered what it ought to do.' It always beholds the eternal world; 'for Soul is one and its work is one.' 'It is never at a loss, in spite of partial opposition; it abides unchanged in one and the same work.' Thus the Universal Soul is not only the creator of the world, but the providence which watches over it. Universal providence consists in the fact that the world is framed in the image of the spiritual world. But the spiritual world is timeless and spaceless, one, harmonious and unchangeable. Here below, on the contrary, we see the unity broken up into parts which by reason of their imperfection are strange or hostile to each other. Hatred reigns rather than love. It was necessary that this inferior world should exist, since every grade must be represented in a complete universe; and God can produce harmony even out of discordant elements. The creative Logos proceeding from Spirit has as it were to contend, here below, with blind necessity; but Spirit dominates necessity. The world as a whole is good; and if we listen, we shall hear it bearing its testimony on this wise; 'It was a God who made me, and from His hands I came forth complete, containing within me all living beings, sufficient to myself and needing nothing, since all are in me, plants and animals, the entire nature of creatures that are born, the many gods and the multitude of dæmons, and good souls, and men happy in their virtue. It is not only the earth which is rich in plants and animals of all kinds; the power of Soul extends also to the sea. The air and the sky are not lifeless; there also dwell all good souls, who give life to the stars and preside over the circular revolution of the heaven, a revolution eternal and full of harmony, which imitates the movement of Spirit...All the beings whom I contain within me aspire after the Good, and all attain it as far as they can. On the Good the whole heaven depends, and my own Soul and the gods who dwell in my different parts, all animals and plants, and those beings also which are thought to have no life. Of these some seem to participate in existence only, others in life, others in sensibility, others in reason, others in the fulness of life.'

The energy of the Universal Soul descends as low as vegetable life, and slumbers even in inorganic nature. Here Plotinus frankly leaves Plato, who allowed souls to animals, but not to vegetables or minerals. This involved him in the awkwardness of cutting the world in half divided into real things which have Soul and other things which, having no Soul, cannot be real. This difficulty confronts the 'personal idealists' of our own day; they are compelled to draw a sharp line across the field of experience, though they are obliged to own that they do not know where it should be drawn, and that Nature gives no indications of such a dualism. Plotinus and Spinoza seem to me to be on much firmer ground in holding that *omnia sunt diversis gradibus animata*. I agree heartily with what Royce says on this subject. 'The vast contrast which we have been taught to make between material and conscious processes depends merely upon the accidents of the human point of view... We have no right whatever to speak of really unconscious Nature, but only of uncommunicative Nature... In case of Nature in general, as in case of the particular portions of Nature known as our fellow-men, we are dealing with phenomenal signs of a vast conscious process, whose relation to Time varies greatly, but whose general characters are throughout the same. From this point of view, evolution would be a series of processes suggesting to us various degrees and types of conscious processes. These processes in the case of so-called inorganic matter are very remote from us.' So Bradley thinks that it proceeds only from our ignorance that we assume an absolutely inorganic in Nature. The inorganic is a limit of our knowledge. We may add that for the most modern physics organic evolution is a mere moment in the great drama of inorganic evolution.

The Universal Soul is not incarnate in the world, though it thinks the world worthy of its care. It directs the world from its abode on high, without being involved in it. It has self-consciousness (*ζυναίσθησις*), but is not conscious *in* its own creations. Creation is the result of 'contemplation.' It is the Logoi within them that move beings to generate, and these Logoi are 'an activity of contemplation,' 'a yearning to create many Forms.'

Plotinus does not deign to notice the quibbling objections which Aristotle (in the *Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, and *De Anima*) brings against the Platonic World-Soul.

Aristotle's own conception of a Creative Mind is not unlike the World-Soul of Plato; and the Arabian philosophers, especially Ibn Gebirol (Avicenna) in his *Fons Vitae*, developed the doctrine of the Creative Reason on strictly Neoplatonic lines. Indian thinkers can readily understand the doctrine, since they are under no temptation to regard the super-individual as an 'abstraction.'

The notion that the heavenly bodies have life or soul has been revived in all seriousness by Leibnitz and Fechner. If Plotinus and his modern followers have unconsciously been influenced by the idea that such bulky bodies must have a corresponding endowment of soul-life, they have undoubtedly exposed themselves to ridicule; but the doctrine itself does not seem to me ridiculous or improbable. Each of our bodies is a world, populated by millions of minute living beings. We are not conscious in them, nor are they conscious of the unitary life of the organism to which they belong. Why should not our planet have a life of its own, thinking thoughts of which we know nothing? The ancient opinion that 'there are many things in the universe more divine than man' seems to me entirely reasonable and probable. The apotheosis of the stars in Plotinus is at any rate a doctrine far more respectable than the denial of a plurality of worlds containing intelligent beings, which we find in Hegel and in Alfred Russel Wallace. Hegel compared the starry heavens to a 'light-rash' on the sky, and to a swarm of flies; for him this planet is the centre of the universe, and Germany is the hub of this planet. Plotinus, with all his ignorance of astronomy, never talked such nonsense as this.

But there is another difficulty, in which Platonism gives us no help. Granting the existence of super-individual psychic activity, why should we assume that it is always superior in value to the individual will and consciousness? What we call racial instincts are more often than not atavistic; they have survived their usefulness and are now a nuisance to mankind. We should be much better off without such absurdities as war and fashion, which have no rational sanction, though they satisfy the cravings of obscure inherited instincts. I can imagine a cynic saying: 'I believe in the racial Soul. He is the devil.' There is, indeed, an emancipation from individual wilfulness which only leads the Soul into slavery. Women especially often accept the dictation of a milliner or of a

priest, who are professors of two arts which are far older than civilisation. There are two ways of sinking our individuality; and perhaps it is not always easy to choose right. There are some bad psychologists who assume that because the subconscious will is mysterious, it is half-divine. This is far from being true. It is sometimes infra-rational and sometimes supra-rational. In the former case it is for reason to try and condemn it; in the latter case it is for reason to endeavour to understand it. Those who have best described the communion of the individual Soul with the great Soul leave us no excuse for confounding it with the base promptings of herd-consciousness or racial atavisms. 'All goes to show that the Soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. A light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all...When it breathes through the intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through the will, it is virtue; when it flows through the affections, it is love.'

Individual Souls

Plotinus combats the views of Heraclitus and the Stoics, who admit only *one* Soul. He will not allow, with some of the Neopythagoreans, like Numenius and Apollonius of Tyana, that individual souls are only the *parts* into which the *anima mundi* is divided. He argues against these monists in a manner not unlike the contention of Thomas Aquinas against Averroes. The categories of quantity, or extension, do not apply to spiritual beings like souls; we cannot speak of souls being parts of other souls. Soul cannot be divided quantitatively, nor can it have heterogeneous parts or limbs, like a body. Individual souls are not functions of the universal Soul, perishing with their body. They are Logoi of Spirits, corresponding to distinct Spirits Yonder. The true account is to say that Spirit subsists in itself without descending into the body; that from it proceed the universal Soul and the individual souls, which exist together up to a certain point, and form one Soul in so far as they do not belong to any particular being. But though on their higher sides they are

united, they presently diverge, as the light divides itself among the various habitations of men, while still remaining one and indivisible. The Universal Soul remains in its heavenly abode; our souls, though not cut off from the higher world, have to seek the places assigned to them in this world.

The division (*μρισμός*) of souls from each other is an affection (*πάθημα*) of the bodies, not of Soul itself. This doctrine is rather difficult. The distinction between souls, and their individuality, are not 'affections of the bodies'; they correspond, as we have seen, to definite ideas in the world of Spirit. But in the spiritual world there is distinction without division. The part, in a sense, contains the whole. Each soul is universal. Each individual soul has its own character and uniqueness, which give it its individuality; but in the world 'yonder' there is no obstacle to their complete communion with each other. On the lower levels, on the other hand, we get separation without disparity, and resemblance without unity.

*'Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart.'*

It is the body and not the Soul which makes these illusory divisions. The Soul, even in its relations with the body, is only in appearance divided; it never loses its vital intercourse with the universal Soul. 'All souls are one.' The Soul is the sphere of the 'One-and-Many,' as the Spirit is the sphere of the 'One-Many.' That is to say, individuality is a fact, but sympathy is also a fact, which bears witness to a real unity behind the apparent separateness. These sympathies, which run through nature, depend on the common origin and ultimate identity of all souls.

Plotinus is anxious to preserve human individuality. He tells us that each individual must be himself, and that not only the Universal Soul but each individual Soul is an 'original cause,' not engendered by something else. In the same place he says that the Soul is entirely its own master only when out of the body; though then it is in intimate union with the Universal Soul. But his fullest discussion of the relation of the individual souls to the Universal Soul is in the ninth chapter of the Fourth Ennead.

Plotinus admits the difficulty of showing how a plurality of souls can arise out of the one Soul of the World. It is a difficulty which constantly besets all philosophical theism; and on the whole his answer is that God has revealed to us the way to get back to Him, but has not thought it necessary to reveal the downward road. The existence of life on the lower levels is a fact of experience, and we must leave it there. Here, however, he invokes the aid of God, and reminds us—it is a favourite device of his—that there is a higher and a lower Soul. The higher Soul is the unity to which all particular souls belong; 'it gives itself to them, and in another sense does not give itself; it passes into them and yet remains in its own unity. As an illustration, he bids us consider how in a science each branch of knowledge contains implicitly and depends upon the whole subject-matter of the science. We cannot prove any proposition in geometry without using methods which are the key to any geometrical problem. In the psychical world, which is the lower part of the spiritual, there is no private ownership and no barriers. If the answer to the question 'How can Soul be both one and many?' seems unsatisfactory, it is because the question itself is faulty. The contradiction which it assumes belongs only to the relations between 'bodies.' Porphyry sums up the teaching of Plotinus on this subject correctly, and rather more clearly than his master. 'We must not believe that the plurality of souls comes from the plurality of bodies. Particular souls subsist, as well as the Universal Soul, independently of bodies, without the unity of the Universal Soul absorbing the multiplicity of the particular souls, or the multiplicity of particular souls splitting up the unity of the Universal Soul. Particular souls are distinct without being separate; they are united to each other without being confused, and without making the Universal Soul a simple aggregate. They are not separated from each other by any barriers, nor are they confused with each other; they are distinct like the different sciences in a single Soul.' Each part of the whole is in a sense infinite; there is no such individuality as the 'self-centred' man supposes; isolation is a disease of the individual Soul, like the loss of the senses. The particular is most itself when it is universal. And yet the differences between souls are real too; it is inner diversity, not space, that makes them many. A modern philosopher might attempt to explain the doctrine by speaking of an infinite number of *foci* in one infinite

consciousness. But we could not so far change the language of Plotinus without altering his thought. For the consciousness of individual souls does not make up that of the World-Soul. He prefers to say that 'when we look outward, we forget our unity. When we turn back upon ourselves, either of our own accord or as Athena plucked Achilles by the hair, we behold ourselves and the whole as one with God.'

Plotinus recurs frequently to the nature of the Soul as both divisible and indivisible. 'It is divisible as being in all the parts of that in which it is, and indivisible as being entire in all and every one of them.' To be 'divided' he regards as a defect of reality or being; separate individuality is a limitation. In the spiritual world, Soul is undivided; and since, as we shall see presently, part of it remains always in the higher sphere, it is never wholly divided, even when animating individual lives. Thus individual souls have a common feeling (*συμπάθεια*), due to their common participation in the undivided Soul. This sympathy is dull in comparison with the complete sympathy of Spirits with each other; but it testifies to their unity of nature. 'We have a fellow-feeling with each other and with the All; so that when I suffer, the All feels it too.' The organ which is the vehicle of this and other vital experiences is the brain, the centre of the nervous system. Plotinus here makes use of the new science of Galen and his school.

How far can we say that Plotinus makes the nature of the Soul essentially teleological? In a remarkable passage he says that the true being—the distinctness—of each individual consists in its *raison d'être* (*τὸ διὰ τί*). In the spiritual world everything has its *raison d'être* in itself; in the world here below the *raison d'être* resides in the 'Form' given from above to each individual. But it is a part of this philosophy to insist that the source and the end of life are the same. The *raison d'être* of an individual life is therefore the goal which it lives to reach. And it is the distinctness of this personal goal which constitutes the distinctness of each individual life. Personality is the determination of life in the direction ordained by the Creator, since, as Aristotle says, 'Nature makes nothing without a purpose.'

Soul as we know it is an essentially teleological category; but the home of the Soul is the world of purposes achieved, a world from which it again sets forth

on its 'adventures brave and new.' In other words, the Soul has a nature from which its activities proceed; it is not itself those activities and nothing more, though its whole life consists of purposive effort.

Soul and Body

Aristotle had taught that Soul and Body only exist in their combination with each other. Body and Soul are two aspects of one concrete living object. But they are not on the same level. Soul is the reality (*οὐσία*) of Body, being the Nature or completion of Body, the end for which Body exists. He also describes Soul as the actuality (*ἐνέργεια*) of Body, by which he means that without Soul Body would be a meaningless potentiality. But he defines his meaning more closely when he says that Soul is the complete expression (*ἐντέλεια*) of Body; Soul sums up all that Body is to be and to mean. He guards himself against the notion that when Soul comes to its own, it has no more life to live; on the contrary, it has only then attained the condition in which free activity is possible. Body is thus, according to Aristotle, necessary to Soul, as the means by which alone Soul can express itself. As usual, he rather exaggerates his opposition to Plato. What he disliked most in Plato's psychology was the doctrine of a Universal Soul which gives life to individual things while standing in a sense aloof from them. But Plotinus is able to use Aristotle's psychology without contradicting Plato.

The Soul is not in the Body, but the Body is enveloped and penetrated by the Soul which created it. Plotinus prefers the metaphor of *light* to any other; but he warns us that spatial images should not be employed more than necessary, and then only for the sake of clearness in exposition. The causes of the association of Soul and Body, he says, are three: a free attraction or voluntary inclination; the law of necessity, proceeding from the nature of things; and thirdly the desire on the part of the Soul to bestow order and beauty on the stage of being which is next below itself. Accordingly, the Soul 'is present' with the Body, but not within it: it remains pure of all admixture, and is always itself. What it gives to the Body is only an image or shadow of itself. This, however, happens in various degrees. The power of the Soul, as we

have seen, penetrates down to the lowest forms of life, and slumbers even in lifeless nature. 'Nothing that is destitute of Soul can exist.' There is a higher and a lower Soul; the latter is the principle of the physiological life. It is characteristic of this philosophy that every concept, on examination, breaks up into two parts, the one connecting it with what is above or 'before' it, the other with what is below or 'after' it. The practice is irritating to the logician, who rightly insists that the intercalation of intermediate terms bridges no gaps; but as a picture of life it is true. The higher Soul, having in itself the eternal light of life, imparts it to all living beings as they are able to receive it. Life alone begets life; even the One 'cannot be alone.' So the Soul must 'unroll' (*ἐξλίττιν*) its powers by creating down to the utmost verge to which it can penetrate.

The connexion between Soul and Body is mediated by *Pneuma*, a word which has far less importance and dignity in Plotinus than in Christian theology. The curious passage in which, following Plato's *Timaeus*, he speaks of the 'spherical motion' of *Pneuma*, does not help us at all to understand the part which he wishes to assign to it in the scale of existence. Porphyry and Proclus say that *Pneuma* is the vehicle of the Soul; the former says that when the Soul is separated from the Body it does not quit the *Pneuma*, which it has received from the celestial spheres. The idea seems to be that the disembodied Soul remains invested with an ethereal form, a sort of gaseous body. We find this ghost of materialism even in Christian writers. Dante, following no doubt some scholastic authority, clearly held it:

*'Tosto che luogo li la circonscrive,
La virtù formativa raggia intorno,
Così e quanto nelle membra vive.
E come l'aer, quand'è ben piorno,
Per l'altrut raggio che in sè si riflette,
Di diversi color si mostra adorno;
Così l'aer vicin quivi si mette
In quella forma, che in lui suggella
Virtualmente l'alma che ristette;*

*E simigliante poi alla fiamella
Che segue il fuoco là 'vunque si muta,
Segue allo spirto sua forma novella.'*

The Pneuma is corporeal, though its substance is of extreme tenuity. It is an invisible, intangible body, the first incorporation of the Soul. Plotinus adds that there are very many *ἄψυχα πνύματα*. Such a conception seems to have no philosophical value, and Plotinus makes very little use of it. It would have been better if he had discarded it altogether.

And yet it is impossible to leave this important word, which fills so large a place in Christian Platonism, without some further comment. Reitzenstein says that the Pauline uses of Pneuma are all to be found in the Hermetic literature and magical papyri. 'The Spirit,' or 'the divine Spirit,' is contrasted with 'Body' and with 'Flesh.' Sometimes Pneuma and Soul seem to be identical. But in other passages Pneuma and Soul are contrasted, the latter being the principle of natural human life, the former of Divine inspiration or indwelling. He thinks that the Gnostic classification of men as 'sarkic, psychic, and pneumatic' is not borrowed from St. Paul, but from the mystery-religions. But in the mystery-documents the 'pneumatic' seems to be always a man in a state of ecstasy, whereas it was one of the great achievements of St. Paul's theology to ethicise the conception of Pneuma which he found in the Old Testament, and to teach that the Holy Spirit is an abiding possession of the true Christian. This makes Pneuma much more like the Plotinian Nous; and it is important to observe that the two words are sometimes interchangeable, both in the papyri and occasionally in St. Paul. In Origen the identification of Pneuma with the Neoplatonic Nous is almost complete. Pneuma is sinless; it is the master and judge of the Soul.

The activity of the Soul is truly creative; all life comes from life. Below its influence we can find nothing but the absolute indeterminateness of Matter. The extent to which the contents of the world are animated by Soul varies infinitely, so that nature presents us with a living chain of being, an unbroken series of ascending or descending values. The whole constitutes a harmony, in which each inferior grade is 'in' the next above. Each existence is thus vitally

connected with all others. This conception, which asserts the right of the lower existences to be what and where they are, is difficult to reconcile with the Platonic doctrine of a 'fall of the Soul.' It is, however, Plotinus' own view, whenever he is not hampered by loyalty to the tradition. His critics have not emphasised nearly enough the unbroken connexion of higher and lower, which in this philosophy is much closer than that which connects individual objects on the same plane with each other. These latter are connected indirectly, though the connexion of each with a common principle; the bond of unity between the higher and lower products of Soul is the aspiration, the activity, the life (*ῥφσις, ἐνέργια, ζωή*), which is the reality of the world of becoming.

Faculties of the Soul

Sensation (αἴσθησις)

The Neoplatonic theory of knowledge is best discussed in connexion with the faculties of the Soul, as enumerated by Plotinus. Beginning at the bottom, only omitting the feeblest manifestations of Soul, in vegetable life, we shall first consider Sensation.

The 'Soul in Matter' (ἡ ἴνυλος ψυχῆ) has as its proper character Sensation, which resides in the part which is 'common' to Soul and Body. Plotinus insists that we must not regard Sensation as a passive impression made by external objects on the perceiving faculty. It is an activity (an ἐνέργεια, not a πάθος); 'a kind of force' (ἰσχύς τις). It is not the eye which sees, but the active power of the Soul (4.6.3). 'External sensation,' he says, impresses forms (τύποι) on the 'animal nature' (τὸ ζῶον), and these forms which are spiritual things (νοητά) can be perceived by the Soul. Sensation is a reception of Form, for the nature of Form must be an activity, which creates by being present. The difference between sensations and spiritual perceptions (νοήσις) is one of degree; sensations are dim spiritual perceptions, spiritual perceptions are clear sensations. This doctrine of sensation or sense-perception as an activity of the Soul is found also in Wordsworth. Sir Walter Raleigh says: 'In the *Lines written above Tintern Abbey*, and often elsewhere, Wordsworth makes division of 'all the mighty world of eye and ear 'into 'what they half-create, and what perceive.' The shaping energy of the mind is never dormant. Perception itself is largely the work of imagination; it is a transaction between the outer powers that operate on the mind through the senses and the inner powers of the mind itself, which impose their own powers on the things submitted to it. Berkeley's doctrine is very similar. 'Sense supplies images to memory. These become subjects for fancy to work upon. Reason considers and judges of the imaginations. And these acts of reason become new objects to the understanding. Each lower faculty is a step that leads to one above it. And the uppermost naturally leads to the Deity. There runs a chain through the whole system of beings. In this chain one link drags another.' We may add that every

sensation implies an intellectual reference, including a distinction between the actual fact and the preceding moment.

The actual process of sensation is explained by the doctrine of sympathies, a very important part of this philosophy. All the activities of the Soul are 'movements,' including that activity which gives life to a body. This vital force possesses a sort of consciousness which embraces all the parts of the being which it vivifies. From this unity, and consciousness of unity, proceeds a 'faint sympathy,' which pervades, in various degrees, the whole world, proving that it is itself a living individual. This sympathy extends to the organs of the body and to the sensible objects which come in contact with them. The fact of sensation is thus evidence of the living unity of nature.

The powers of the sensitive Soul are localised in certain parts of the body. Sight, hearing, taste, and smell have each their own organs. Only the sense of touch is present wherever there are nerves. But the real organ of sensation is the seminal Logos, just as Soul is the organ of discursive reason.

The knowledge which sensation gives is only 'belief (*πίστις*), since the Soul in sensation has not in itself the things which it perceives.' The object perceived by the senses is only an image of the spiritual reality; sensation is a kind of dream of the Soul. Or we may say that sensation is the messenger of the King, Spirit.

Modern psychologists have raised the question whether there is actually a sensational level of experience, as distinguished from the perceptual. Plotinus, if I understand him rightly, would deny that a purely sensational experience can exist. It is a limit, like 'Matter'; a limit to which the lower kinds of experience approximate in various degrees. But consciousness, it is probable, always implies perception. In all consciousness there is a synthesis of sense-material, an interpretation and combination of elements; and this, as Plotinus rightly says, is an activity of the Soul. Whenever we recognise an object as a definite thing, we begin to apply the categories of identity and difference, of the universal and the particular. Practically, we also always recognise change. And since it is only the permanent that changes, the recognition of change involves that of permanence. Thus, if it is difficult to draw any line between

sensation and perception, it is equally difficult to say where perception passes into thought.

Plato discredited sense-perception on the ground that it pictures reality as in a state of growth and decay, which cannot be true, since real being cannot pass into not-being. Modern philosophy, leaving these dialectical puzzles, has studied the physiology of sensation, and has maintained the old distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Sugar, it is said, is not 'really' sweet; it only tastes sweet; and there is no resemblance between the sensation and the object which evokes it. Waves of ether are not at all like light. On the other hand, bodies are 'really' extended and movable and solid. But it is very doubtful whether this distinction can be maintained. Our ideas of primary qualities are derived from sensation; and the space-picture is not taken in from the external world, but produced in much the same manner as our perceptions of secondary qualities. According to Lotze, we have no more ground for regarding extension as an absolute property of things than taste or colour. If this is so, the conclusion will certainly be drawn that we have no ground for believing in the objective existence of Body at all. But Plotinus does not anticipate Berkeley. Reality for him is not mental, though there can be no reality without mind. If we reduce the phenomenal world to a mere thought of the Soul, we shall have to make the spiritual world a mere thought of Spirit, and this is by no means what Plotinus intended. The illusory but not wholly imaginary *οὐσία* of the objects of sense-perception is an imperfect picture of the real *οὐσία* which is known by Spirit.

Pleasure and Pain

Pleasure and Pain belong neither to the Body nor to the Soul, but to 'the compound,' that is to say, to the Soul present to the Body, or the Body present to the Soul. The higher or reasonable Soul, in which our personality resides, does not *feel* these sensations, though it is aware of them. The higher part of the Soul wears the Body, with its pleasures and pains, like a garment; they belong to it, but it is detached from them. Pleasure and pain are only possible because the union of 'the compound' is unstable; we feel pain when

we recognise that ‘the Body is deprived of the image of the Soul’; we feel pleasure when harmony is restored between them.

Plotinus is right in saying—for this is his meaning—that pleasure and pain are not pure sensations, since they are states of consciousness; and, on the other hand, that they are not affections (*πάθη*) of the Soul. What is characteristic of pleasure and pain is that they ‘tell us nothing beyond themselves, have no meaning, and suggest no object or idea.’ And when they are over, they are as if they had never been. We do not feel better for having had a good dinner last week, nor worse for having had a bad toothache the week before. (We are speaking only of physical pleasure and pain: psychical and spiritual experiences, whether happy or miserable, have often a vitality as strong as our own lives.) This isolation and ephemeral character of pleasure and pain stamp them as being very slightly connected with the real or spiritual world. They are associated exclusively with finite *foci*, and cannot pass beyond them. The Soul can therefore to a large extent conquer them by living upon its own highest level. It will then continue to be conscious of them, but not as states of itself.

Memory (*μνήμη—ἀνάμνησία*)

Memory and Imagination (*φαντασία*), which in Plotinus are closely connected, belong to the Discursive Reason (*διάνοια*). Memory has no place in the Spiritual World, which is above time. For Memory is always of something which was but is no longer; the object present to pure Spirit is eternal and unchanging. The chief difference between Memory and Imagination is that the phantasm carries with it little connotation of truth or falsehood with reference to any external object, and implies no relation to any time in past experience at which it was originally presented. Memory, on the other hand, implies at once an object to which it corresponds, and it is attended by a consciousness of some time in the past at which the remembered event actually happened. Consequently, as Aristotle saw, it is only those living beings which possess a sense of time that are capable of Memory. Aristotle, however, distinguishes between Memory proper (*μνήμη*),

which is the passive faculty of retention, 'the permanent possession of a sensuous picture as a copy which represents the object of which it is the picture,' and Recollection (*ἀνάμνησιν*), the power of active search or recall. Modern psychologists in the same way distinguish between spontaneous and voluntary Memory. Even Plotinus, who clearly holds that there can be no Memory without an activity of the Soul, speaks of *μνήμη* as a *πάθημα τῆς ψυχῆς*. Recollection demands a higher kind of volitional and rational activity, and is confined to man, while Memory is found also in the lower animals. In 'Recollection,' which gives actuality to the notions which the Soul possessed only potentially, 'time is not present.' Plotinus transforms Plato's 'Recollection' into a doctrine of innate ideas potentially present. Memory is always of something which the Soul has experienced, not of something innate. Recollection, on the other hand, is of things which belong to the Soul, but which are not always active in it. The term 'Memory' is incorrectly applied to the spiritual energising of the Soul in accordance with its innate principles. Time belongs to memory, not to recollection. The higher Soul, which constitutes our personality, has Memory, though Spirit has it not; the lower Soul has a Memory of its own. In a sense, Memory constitutes the empirical *ego*. After death these two Souls are separated, though each retains a dim consciousness of what belongs to the other. Both preserve a Memory of friends, country, etc.; but the inferior Soul mixes them with passive emotions, while the superior remembers only the higher experiences. The superior Soul is by choice forgetful of all that is foreign to its true nature. At the same time, it *recovers* ideas which belong to earlier and nobler states of existence, which it has forgotten here below. Lastly, Memory is of images only; spiritual perception (*νόησις*) is first transformed into an image reflected in the mirror of imagination; and Memory is that which grasps this image. We do not 'remember' *νοητά*, because we contemplate them as permanent activities of our highest self. The Soul when contemplating spiritual things does not 'remember' even itself; self-consciousness, which on the psychic plane always involves Memory, is not the highest state of the Soul. There is such a thing as unconscious Memory.

In spite of his doctrine that there is no Memory Yonder, Plotinus would not have combated the following statement of Paulsen. 'The fact that we retain

the past in memory gives us an idea of the permanent relation between the individual Soul and the universal Spirit.’ It might also be maintained that what we remember is always the significance—the noetic correspondences—of a past event, though we may often misinterpret that significance.

Imagination (φαντασία)

In Plato *φαντασία*, or *τὸ φανταστικόν*, ‘the image-making faculty,’ holds the lowest rank among the intellectual faculties of the Soul. It is the mental representation of an object actually absent, the memory of a sensible object. It is the waking dream of the Soul. Plato indulges in a characteristic fancy when he makes the liver the seat of the Imagination. The power proceeding from Nous sends upon this organ thoughts (*διανοήματα*), which, reflected on its bright surface, are transformed into images. The Imagination is the faculty of representing thoughts under the form of images.

In Aristotle *φαντασία* is denned as ‘the movement which results upon an actual sensation,’ i.e. the continued presence of an impression after the object which first excited it has been removed from actual experience. So Hobbes defines fancies as ‘motions within us, reliques of those made in the sense.’ Imagination is closely associated with sensation; the faculty which receives sensations is identical with that which forms pictures; but they are manifested in different ways. And there are obvious differences between the two; sense requires an object to excite it into activity, imagination does not; sense is always ready to act, imagination is capricious; sensation belongs to every animal, imagination only to those which are more highly organised. The reports, of sense are, so far as they go, true; those of imagination are often false, and sometimes have no relation to any external fact. We can exercise imagination when our eyes are shut. Imagination differs from opinion (*δόξα*), in that opinion is always attended by belief (*πίστις*, which implies an act of thought and reason. Nor can we regard imagination as a combination of opinion and sensation. Our opinion does not always coincide with our conception of our sensations. Our eyes tell us that the sun is an inch or two across; but our opinion is that it is larger than the earth.

The faculty of forming pictures is so independent of the judgment that illusions frequently occur. 'Movements of the senses themselves,' without any objective excitation, produce the same pictures as those which arise when the object of sensation is itself in movement. During sleep especially, the restraints put by the understanding on the image-making faculty are inhibited; and the phenomenon of dreaming is the result.

This theory of imagination appears at first sight to be pure materialism. The impressions of sense are conceived as strictly analogous to the impressions of a seal upon wax. But for Aristotle the impressions of sense are not themselves material; they are generalised conceptions; and so the pictures of the imagination tend to pass into ideas.

The Stoics conceived the human mind as a material substance, which at birth is like a sheet of clean paper, Impressions (*φαντασίαι*) are made upon it through the senses. Some of these impressions are true; others are false. False impressions may be subjective delusions; or they may be the result of carelessness, or of excitement. True impressions conform to and resemble the objects; and they have a distinctive power of gripping the mind and being gripped by it. We recognise a true impression by its irresistible clearness; it is (literally, for the Stoic materialist) stamped, with every outline distinct, on the surface of the Soul. These impressions are turned into concepts by the free assent of the mind, on the basis of man's common experience. Men differ, not about the natural concepts themselves, but in the application of them: e.g. the Jews and Romans agree in preferring holiness to all things, but differ as to whether it is impious to eat swine's flesh. The crude materialism of this theory of mental impressions is easy to criticise; but we have seen that even Aristotle used somewhat similar language. In fact it was not till a late stage of Greek philosophy that materialism was recognised as such, and rejected. The doctrine of irresistible impressions (*καταληπτική φαντασία*) as a criterion of certainty, is not valueless. The Stoics insist that it is only the healthy mind that can trust its clear convictions; also that the standard is not private and subjective, but the consensus of sane, calm, careful, and unprejudiced persons. Assent to sense-impressions is a voluntary act; and the will that accepts or

rejects them is a moral and rational will, already convinced that the world is an ordered system, which makes for righteousness.

Plotinus deals with imagination in the First and Fourth Enneads. In the First Ennead he defines imagination as 'the impact from outside on the irrational soul.' This, however is only the 'sensible imagination'; there is also an 'intellectual imagination.' He returns to the subject in the Fourth Ennead, where he says that the higher imagination is attached to the rational, the lower to the irrational soul.

Imagination, opinion (*δόξα*), and reasoning (*διάνοια*) have their places in an ascending scale between sensation and *νόησις*. Perception, as an act of knowledge, seizes the forms (*ἴδη*) of sensible objects. At the summit of this faculty, when the percept (*αἴσθημα*) becomes a purely mental representation, the faculty takes the name of imagination (*τὸ φανταστικόν*) in presence of the object, of memory in its absence. Imagination transforms into images both the forms of sensible objects, and our thoughts about them. Imagination is midway between sensation and reasoning; in its higher state it passes into opinion (*δόξα*).

Here, as elsewhere, we are troubled by difficulties of nomenclature.

Φαντασία is not exactly 'imagination,' being nearer to the German *Vorstellung*; and the representation of material objects apart from their presence, which Plotinus calls *φάντασμα*, modern philosophy incorrectly calls an *idea*. The differences between the idea or phantasm and the percept, presentation, or impression, are well summed up by Mr. Maher. The idea is almost invariably very faint in intensity as compared with the impression. The representation is transitory, the perceived object is permanent. The image is normally subject to our control; the sensation, so long as the sense is exposed to the action of the object, is independent of us. Most important of all is the reference to objective reality which accompanies the act of sense-perception, but is absent from that of the imagination.

Imagination plays a more important part in mental life and progress than is often supposed. 'The imagination is the prophetic forerunner of all great scientific discoveries.' Even in the most abstract of sciences, such as

mathematics, it has its indispensable place. In religion it has had, and still has, an immense influence. 'Mythology is an observation of things encumbered with all that they can suggest to a dramatic fancy. It is neither conscious poetry nor valid science, but the common root and raw material of both...It belongs to a level of thought, when men pored on the world with intense indiscriminate interest, accepting and recording the mind's vegetation no less than that observable in things, and mixing the two developments together in one wayward drama.' At all levels of culture, it fills innumerable gaps in experience, and builds bridges over many a *salto mortale*.

Wordsworth has a magnificent passage in praise of spiritual imagination, the *νορὰ φαντασία* of Plotinus.

*'This spiritual love acts not nor can exist
Without imagination, which in truth
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And reason in her most exalted mood.'*

This exalts imagination to a higher position than Plotinus could have conceded to his *φαντασία*. Imagination, for Wordsworth, is Spirit creating, after its own image, ideas which are the lode-star or guiding light of the soul, up to the very end of its Godward course. Even 'intellectual love,' the *νοῦς ἐρῶν* which conducts Plotinus above the world of Spirit to the vision of the One, is for Wordsworth inseparable from imagination. It is this faculty which gives us faith in God and immortality, by presenting to us clear images of eternal truths. The difference between this teaching and that of Plotinus is not so great as appears, because the Greek philosopher acknowledges the fact and value of these spiritual images, though he would ascribe them to a higher faculty than imagination. And Wordsworth himself knew that in the mystical trance imagination is quiescent. But the doctrine that 'intellectual love' is in indissoluble union with imagination, and creates images which are the reflection of 'reason in her most exalted mood,' is highly important. It is the key to the understanding of religious symbols generally, which have a high truth as creations of imagination and love acting together, but which have a fatal tendency either to petrify or to evaporate, losing in the process both their

truth and their value, When they petrify, they become flat historical recitals, imposed tyrannically upon the mind and conscience as tests of institutional loyalty. When they evaporate, they become poetical fancies, emotional luxuries which form the content of a spurious and superficial mysticism. Wordsworth indicates this latter danger in his useful distinction between imagination and fancy, the latter a wayward and sportive faculty, which invents types and sympathies instead of finding them. Fancy, as Ruskin says, is never quite serious; and the religion which gives it the rein is seldom quite serious either.

Principal J. C. Shairp analyses poetic imagination as follows. To our ordinary conceptions of things it adds force, clearness, and distinctness. It seems to be a power intermediate between intellect and emotion. In its highest form, it would seem to be based upon moral intensity. The emotional and the intellectual in it act and react on each other. In its highest form it is that intense intuition which goes straight to the core of an object, and lays hold of the essential life of a scene. It is that by which Shakespeare read the inmost heart of man, Wordsworth of nature. It is also the combining and harmonising power, and it is the power which clothes intellectual and spiritual conceptions in appropriate forms. As Shakespeare says, it 'bodies forth the forms of things unknown.' But it can also spiritualise what is visible and corporeal, filling it with a higher meaning. It is not, as has sometimes been supposed, a deceiving faculty; rather it is pre-eminently a truthful and truth-seeing faculty, perceiving aspects of truth which can find no entrance by any other inlet. It is accompanied by a delight in the object or truth beheld, a thrill which is one of the most exquisite moods that man ever experiences.

Opinion (δόξα)

This, in Plotinus, is simply the superior form of imagination. It consists of unsystematised isolated beliefs about things.

Reason (διάνοια)

In the discursive reason the proper function of the Soul is achieved. The most instructive passage is in . . . ‘Sensation has seen a man and furnished the image (τύπον) of him to reason. And what does reason say? It may say nothing yet, but takes knowledge of him and there stops. But if reason reflects with itself ‘who is this?’ and having met him before, calls in the help of memory, it says, ‘It is Socrates.’ If it develops the form of Socrates, it divides what imagination gave it. If it adds that Socrates is good, it speaks still of things known by the senses, but what it affirms—‘goodness’—it takes from itself, because it has with it the standard of the good (κανόνα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ). But how can it have the good in itself? Because it has the form of the good (ἀγαθοειδέης) and is strengthened for the perception of goodness by the Spirit which shines upon it; for this pure power of Soul receives the prints of Spirit which, is just above it. But why should we call all that is superior to sensation Soul rather than Spirit? It is because the power of the Soul consists in reasoning, and all these operations belong to the reasoning faculty. But why do we not attribute self-knowledge to Soul, and so make an end? Because we have assigned to reason the busy examination of external things, while Spirit, we say, examines only itself and what it has in itself. If anyone says, ‘Why should not reason, by another faculty of the Soul, examine what belongs to itself?’ the answer is that then we should have pure Spirit, and not reason. ‘But what hinders that pure Spirit should be in the Soul?’ ‘Nothing hinders.’ ‘But does it belong to Soul?’ No, it is rather ‘our Spirit,’ something other than the reasoning faculty, something that has soared up, something that is still ours, though we do not count it among the parts of the Soul. It is ours and not ours. We use it and we use it not, though reason we use always. It is ours when we use it, and not ours when we use it not. What do we mean by using it? Is it not that we become it, and speak as if we were it—or rather as if we were made like it (κατ’ ἐκίνοιν)? For we are not Spirit; we are made it by our highest reasoning faculty which receives Spirit. For we perceive by our perceptive faculty; and it is we who perceive. Do we then reason in the same manner? It is we who reason, and who think the spiritual thoughts that are in the mind (νοοῦμεν τὰ ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ νοήματα). This is ourselves; while the products of spiritual

activity are above us, and the products of sense-perception below us. This is the proper sphere of the Soul, between sense-perception and Spirit. We all agree that sense-perception belongs to us, because we always have it. We are not sure whether Spirit is ours, because we do not use it always, and because it is detached from us—detached in so far as it does not bend down to us, but we rather have to look up to it. Sense-perception is our messenger, Spirit is our king.’

In such a passage the difficulty of finding English words for some of the most important technical terms in the philosophy is acute. But my hearers will have understood by this time that *νοῦς* and its derivatives always refer to the inner life of Spirit in the world of eternal reality, while *διάνοια* and its verb refer to the discursive reason, the ordinary processes of thought. Sensation and sense-perception operate on a lower level than *διάνοια*, which is the proper activity of Soul.

In another place he asks how we can account for the blunders of opinion and discursive reason. Spirit, it is admitted, is impeccable; is the Soul impeccable too? He answers, as usual, that Soul or personality is not a fixed entity. The ‘true man, the pure man,’ possesses spiritual virtues, which belong to the detached or separated (*χωριστή* or *χωριζομένη*) Soul. The Soul may win detachment even on earth. But ‘we are double’; and the lower Soul is entangled in the illusions of bodily existence. The most intimate and characteristic activities of the Soul (*ἴδια τῆς ψυχῆς*) are those which ‘do not need the body for their exercise.’

The Soul and Consciousness

Self-consciousness belongs to the reasoning faculty. The Soul ‘turns to itself and knows itself and the things that belong to it.’ Consciousness is not primitive; it accrues (*γίγνται*). The psychic principle of life is reflected as in a mirror, in which ‘we see ourselves as another,’ The Soul knows itself truly only when it knows itself as Spirit. But the highest activity of the Soul is not self-conscious in the ordinary sense, though in another sense we may say that Spirit alone is self-conscious. What we commonly mean by self-consciousness

is awareness of ourself as an object different from the perceiving subject. But this is a sign that we have not yet reached our goal, which is that the seer and the seen shall be as one. Consciousness is aroused most sharply by what is alien and hostile, just as when the body is in health it is not conscious of its organs; 'we do not feel ourselves nor what belongs to us.' 'We cannot get outside ourselves.' Plotinus observes also that we do things best when we are not thinking of ourselves as doing them. Thus what we usually call self-consciousness is for Plotinus consciousness of externality. When we 'lose our Soul and find it 'in Spirit, we are what we contemplate, and can no longer objectify it as something other than the perceiving mind. So R. L. Nettleship says, 'I am getting more and more convinced that being conscious of something is just *not* the idea or consciousness of what we say it is, but of something else. It means that we are *not* ourselves fully.' This seems to me perfectly sound. Consciousness of self is in truth consciousness of a contrasted not-self, with which notwithstanding we claim kinship. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as self-consciousness. 'We cannot too strongly insist,' says Professor Taylor, 'that if by self-consciousness we mean a cognitive state which is its own object, there is no such thing, and it is a psychological impossibility that there should be any such thing as self-consciousness. No cognitive state ever has itself for its own object. Every cognitive state has for its object something other than itself.' What we call self-consciousness is an experience which, has its place in mental growth; it is useful for certain purposes; but it is not an ultimate state of the human Spirit. In our best and most effective moments, when we really 'enter into' our work, we leave it behind. But there is an experience of living—a 'waking state,' as Plotinus calls it, which becomes ours when we are identified with the object of our knowledge. This is the experience of pure Spirit, especially when it 'turns towards the One.' When we reach this state, we often doubt whether the experience is real, because the senses 'protest that they have seen nothing.' Of course they have not, because we are then concerned with the supersensible. Hence there is a kind of unconsciousness in the highest experiences of the Soul, though we can no more doubt them than our own existence. Plotinus also shows that in the spiritual world it is nonsense to separate thought and the consciousness of thought.

Plotinus distinguishes two forms of consciousness: (1) *συναίσθησις*, which is sometimes called *αἴσθησις* and *παρακολούθησις*—the knowledge which a being has of the unity of its parts; (2) *ἀντίληψις*—the consciousness of the opposition of subject and object in self-consciousness. It is the prerogative of Spirit to know itself as itself; Soul knows itself ‘as another’s.’ The Soul, in knowing itself, knows ‘that there is something better than itself.’ Discursive thought, the characteristic activity of the Soul, contains within itself neither the material nor the formal nor the final conditions of its own thinking. It reasons about data supplied by sense, in order to gain knowledge. Its powers are directed to transcending the conditions of their own activities. It is not the presence of the subject-object relation which for Plotinus is the sign of inherent limitations in discursive thought; but the conscious *opposition* of the self and the not-self. When the level of spiritual perception is gained, the externality of the object has wholly disappeared, though the duality which is the condition of thought remains. Discursive thought is the polarised ‘copy’ of *νόησις*, which is at once creative and immanent activity. Discursive thought, as opposed to creative or purposive thought, ‘of itself moves nothing,’ as Aristotle says; but *διάνοια* is in fact never separated from *νόησις* at one end, and creativeness (*ποίησις*) at the other. Plotinus intentionally makes *νοῦς* and *διάνοια* overlap. He speaks of ‘reasoning Spirit, Spirit in differentiation and motion.’ Soul, on the other hand, is ‘the Matter of Spirit, being of spiritual form.’ Soul is itself within the world of Spirit and must of necessity be unified with it. Soul is *οὐσία*; there is no line between it and Spirit. The realm of Soul is the ‘world of life’; it is in this world that individuals live and move; Spirit is ‘above us.’ That part of the Soul which remains when we have separated from it the body and its passions is ‘the image of Spirit.’ And yet Plotinus reminds us that even ‘the Soul here below,’ which is not the Soul in its full potency, possesses true Being, and hence the wisdom, justice, and knowledge which it possesses are not mere shadows—they too are real. Indeed, if we include in ‘the sensible world’ the Soul and all that belongs to it, there is nothing Yonder that is not also Here. But the world of Soul, as we know it, is only real when it is taken as a whole. It is split up among individual *foci* of consciousness, and in time. The soul-world, as we know it in experience, is a world of claims and counter-claims, in which *things* are known as *instruments* for the striving

individual. This experience does not express the highest truth about the contents of this world. The pity of it is that language, which was made for the fireside and the market-place, helps to stamp this view of life on our minds, since it cannot easily express any other. Wordsworth, and other poets and prophets too, have lamented this incurable imperfection in human speech. But the world of souls, and of soul-making, is after all the world in which we have to live. There are 'other heights in other worlds, God willing,' and these are not wholly out of sight; but the world in which we profess ourselves to be only strangers and sojourners is, for the time being, our home.

What has been said will make it plain that consciousness, for Greek thought, is continuous with the infra-conscious on one side and with the supra-conscious on the other. The Greeks were less interested in the gradual emergence of consciousness out of the unconscious than with, the gradual emergence of order and purpose out of inertia and meaninglessness. Soul-life is the immediate experience of an organic individual, from the moment when he begins to be an organic individual. This experience is conscious and self-conscious in various degrees. Its ideal perfection is such an all-embracing experience as will break down all barriers between the individual Soul and the Universal Soul. 'The Soul is potentially all things.' 'We are a spiritual world.'

This refusal to ascribe a primary importance to human consciousness, which we have found in Plotinus, is characteristic of almost all philosophy which is in sympathy with mysticism, and can claim much outside support. Campanella follows the Neoplatonists in holding that there is a dim knowledge in plants and even in minerals. Leibnitz uses similar language; each of his monads, though impenetrable, was supposed to be a kind of microcosm, sleeping, dreaming, or awake. He insists that there are unconscious perceptions in man. Ferrier says, 'What do we mean by the word consciousness, and upon what ground do we refuse to attribute consciousness to the animal creation? In the first place, we mean by consciousness the notion of self which in man generally, but by no means invariably, accompanies his sensations, passions, emotions, play of reason, or states of mind whatsoever. Man might easily have been, endowed with reason without at the same time becoming aware of his endowment, or blending it with the

notion of himself.' So Bain says, 'Consciousness is inseparable from feeling, but not, as it appears to me, from action and thought.' Lewes holds that 'we often think as unconsciously as we breathe,' and Maudsley that consciousness is 'an incidental accompaniment of mind.'

An elaborate attempt has lately been made, by Arthur Drews, to connect the philosophy of Plotinus with that of Hartmann, author of *The Philosophy of the Unconscious*. This attempt seems to me to have failed completely, for the simple reason that Hartmann's system is vitiated by fundamental inconsistencies which are certainly not to be found in Plotinus. Hartmann tries to combine the pantheism and pessimism which he learned from Schopenhauer with an evolutionary optimism which his own character prompted him to accept. But the pessimism of Schopenhauer was the direct consequence of disillusioned egoism and hedonism. No one is likely to despair of the world who has not tried to exploit it for anti-social aims. This kind of pessimism is almost as foreign to Neo-platonism as to Christianity, And how is it possible to reconcile it with the optimistic teleology which finds the principle of the world in an 'over-conscious clear-seeing intelligence,' which is transcendent as well as immanent, and the beneficent designs of which are opposed only by the 'blind irrational will' of conscious creatures? Hartmann's attempts to bring together the discrepant sides of his theory seem to me only to demonstrate their incompatibility. At the same time, there are many of his utterances which agree with, and illustrate Plotinus very well; as when he says 'To know oneself as of divine nature does away with all divergence between self-will and the universal will, and with all alienation between man and God; to regard the life of one's spirit as a spark of the divine flame engenders a resolution to lead a truly divine life;...we acquire the will and power to think, feel, and act as if God were in us, and to transfigure each finite task in the divine light.' Such utterances belong not to the disciple of Schopenhauer, but to a moralist who wished to substitute for traditional Christianity a spiritual religion which should include the discoveries of modern science and especially the doctrine of evolution.

Bergson has been studying and lecturing upon Plotinus, and there are indications that the great Neoplatonist has had some influence upon his

thought. In his Huxley Lecture (1911) he identifies mind with consciousness, and almost identifies consciousness with memory. 'A consciousness that retained nothing of the past would be a consciousness that died and was re-born every instant—it would be no longer consciousness. Such is just the condition of matter; or at least it is just the way we represent matter when we wish to oppose it to consciousness. Leibnitz defined matter—that is to say, what is not consciousness—by calling it momentary mind, an instantaneous consciousness. And in fact an instantaneous consciousness is just what we call unconsciousness. All consciousness then is memory; all consciousness is a preservation and accumulation of the past in the present.' But, he adds, consciousness is not only memory of the past; it is also anticipation of the future; it is a hyphen between past and future. How far, he proceeds to ask, is consciousness traceable in nature? It seems to us to be dependent on the possession of a brain. But just as low organisms are able to digest without a stomach, so when the nervous substance is merged in the rest of living matter, consciousness may be diffused in an attenuated form, and may exist feebly wherever there is life. But the truth seems to be that while consciousness—which means the capacity of *choice* is in principle present in all living matter, many organisms, such, as parasites and nearly all vegetables, do not use it, so that it has become or remains dormant and atrophied. As action becomes automatic, consciousness is withdrawn from it. 'Two careers are open to a simple mass of protoplasmic jelly.' It may follow the path towards movement and action, which requires an increasing exercise of consciousness; or it may prefer the humdrum existence of a placid vegetable soul. Life is something that encroaches upon inert matter, over which necessity sits enthroned. Life means indetermination—freedom. There is 'a slight elasticity in matter,' which gives liberty its chance. The dynamic is an 'explosive,' a portion of solar energy absorbed in food. Thus consciousness 'takes possession of matter,' and directs energy in a chosen way. So we have on one side an immense machine, subject to necessity, and on the other free consciousness. Behind this activity of consciousness there is a climbing impulse, driving organic beings 'to run greater and greater risks in order to arrive at greater efficiency.' But consciousness, which enters matter with the objects just stated, is sometimes ensnared by it. Liberty is dogged by

automatism, and, except in man, is stifled by it. Matter, however, is necessary; it plays at once the rôle of obstacle and of stimulus, and without it no effort would be put forth.

The view thus briefly sketched has some obvious affinities to the philosophy of Plotinus. But it is at bottom irreconcilable with it. It is based on the assumption—which underlies all Bergson's philosophy—that caprice and eccentricity are the marks of freedom and spiritual activity. The spontaneity of life is supposed to show itself in motiveless diversity, while regularity—all that can be predicted—is a proof of thralldom to blind necessity and mechanism. It is no wonder that superstitious supernaturalism holds out both hands to this philosophy. But such a view is abhorrent to Platonism, since it hands over nature, not indeed to a malignant power, but to purposeless machinery, and the formative and directive agency which interferes with the regularity of its working is not the Universal Soul, which for Plotinus is responsible for the whole visible universe, including those parts of it which seem to us devoid of life, but a plurality of finite spirits, who act upon the world from outside, as it were, and triumph in proportion as they can introduce the unpredictable into the predetermined. All this is contrary to the genius of Greek philosophy, and especially of Platonism. For Plotinus, the purpose-fulness and relevance of the world here below, across which no hard lines are drawn, are the image of the complete harmony which prevails in the eternal world. We are not driven to assign some phenomena to mechanism and others to miracle; Soul, and behind Soul Spirit, are at work everywhere. It follows that the presence of purpose in the world does not depend upon the interference of finite consciousness with mechanical movements. The great dramas of organic evolution and of human history are in no sense the life-story of any individual; the actors for the most part are quite unconscious of the larger aspects of their lives. But these larger purposes certainly exist, and they are prior to and independent of the consciousness of the actors. The *foci* which we call ourselves exist as limiting *foci* only for soul-consciousness; Spirit enjoys an enriched form of consciousness not tethered to any *foci*, in which the contrast between externality and internality is transcended. This is like what Bucke calls cosmic consciousness. But Plotinus is not fond of the word consciousness in relation to Spirit. 'Does the Soul Yonder remember itself?' he

asks. 'It is not probable. He who contemplates the spiritual world does not recall who he is, or reflect whether he is Soul or Spirit. Giving himself entirely to the contemplation of the spiritual world, he does not return upon himself in thought; he possesses himself, but he applies himself to the spiritual and becomes the spiritual, towards which he plays the part of Matter.' Self-consciousness, in a word, is another name for inattention.

The suggestion may be hazarded that the chief function of consciousness, which is only one of Nature's many instruments, is the formation of new habits. It seems clear that it belongs to beings who are in course of change and development, and to times when they are not acting from habit. It appertains to psychic life as we know it, and in the eternal world it must be raised to a higher form, widely different from our present experience. 'Spirit is what it possesses,' says Plotinus.

The Soul and the Ego

The abstract ego is a different conception from that of the Soul. It seems to imply three assumptions, all of which are disputable. The first is that there is a sharp line separating subject and object, corresponding to the uncompromising antithesis of ego and non-ego. The second is that the subject, thus sundered from the object, remains identical through time. The third is that this indiscerptible entity is in some mysterious way both myself and my property. Just as Lucretius says that men fear death because they unconsciously duplicate themselves, and stand by, in imagination, at their own cremation, so we are seriously concerned to know whether that precious part of our possessions, our 'personality,' will survive death. Plotinus will have nothing to say to the first of these assumptions. Not only do subject and object freely flow into each other on the psychic level, but on the spiritual level there are no barriers at all. To the second he would answer that the empirical self is by no means identical throughout, and that the spiritual 'idea,' the 'Spirit in Soul,' which we are to strive to realise, is only 'ours' potentially. To the third he would reply that no doubt individuality is a fact

(*δι' ἑκάστων ἑκάστων ἵναί*), but that the question whether it is *my* self that has its distinct place 'yonder' is simply meaningless.

We have to admit that in Plotinus there are traces of a real conflict between the Orphic doctrine of individual immortality, and the Heracleitean doctrine that there is only one life, which animates every creature during its transit from birth to death. The doctrine of rebirth, which rests on the idea of Souls as *substantiae*, does not agree well with the idea of the World-Soul. A statement which throws much light on Plotinus' view of personality is in the form of an answer to the question, how the higher part of the Soul can possess sensation. The answer is that the objects of sensation exist in the spiritual world, and are there apprehended by a faculty analogous to what we call sensation. The Soul here below combines and systematises the *data* of sensation, and thereby assimilates them to the harmony which exists in the spiritual world. 'If the bodies which are here below existed also yonder, the higher Soul would perceive and apprehend them. The man of the spiritual world (*ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἐκῆ*), the Soul adapted to life there, can apprehend these things; whence also the lower man, the copy of the spiritual man, has powers (*λόγους*) which are copies of spiritual powers; and the man in the Spirit (*ὁ ἐν νῶ ἄνθρωπος*) is a copy of the man who is above all men. This highest man illuminates the second man, and the second the third. The lowest man in a sense possesses the others, not that he becomes what they are but that he is in contact with them. One of us is active in accordance with the third and lowest man; another receives also something from the second, another from the first. Each man's self is determined by the principle of his activity (*ὅστιν ἑκάστος καθ' ὃν ἐνργῆ*); though each individual possesses all the three ranks, and possesses them not.' The meaning of this cryptic passage is that there are three planes on which a man may live, and that his rank in the scale of existence depends on the choice which he makes. He may live a purely external life, obeying his natural instincts and not reflecting. Or he may live in accordance with his discursive reason, the life of an intelligent but unspiritual man. Or lastly, he may live on what is really a superhuman plane—'that of the gods and godlike men,' the life of Spirit. The Soul, as a microcosm, has within it the potentiality of all three lives; but it chooses which of its faculties it shall develop, and which shall remain latent. If we have to choose one kind of

activity as characteristically *human*, and say that our personality as individuals resides in that sphere of activity, we must select the second grade, that of the discursive intellect; because the merely sensuous life is infra-human, and since in the life of the Spirit we are really raised above the conditions and limitations of earthly existence, no man, while in the body, can live permanently on this level. But we cannot remind ourselves too often that Plotinus allows us no fixed fulcrum of self-consciousness as the centre of our world and our activities. We are potentially all things; our personality is what we are able to realise of the infinite wealth which our divine-human nature contains hidden in its depths, This being so, we must not lay much stress on the tripartite division of soul-life which we have just been considering. It represents three stages in the ladder of existence and value, but these shade off into each other. Elsewhere he tells us that 'every man is double'; and that even the universal Soul has its higher and lower sphere of activity. Every living thing has a vital connexion with what is above and with what is below itself, and the choice between the better and the worse is continually offered. But neither the 'double' nor the 'threefold' man must be interpreted as a hard and strict classification. 'A man must be *one*,' as he says himself; and 'the Soul cannot be divided quantitatively.' Even here below Soul is 'undivided' (*ἀμέριστος*) as well as 'divided,' and 'sees with that part by which it keeps the nature of the whole.';

The whole trend of Neoplatonism is towards those philosophies which teach that the ego or self is not *given* to start with. Our nature, our personality, is in process of being communicated to us. The individual is a microcosm striving after unity and universality. We do not yet know ourselves; the Soul feels itself to be an exile and a wanderer from God (*φυγὰς θεόν και ἀλήτην*). It is impelled by home-sickness to struggle up towards the world of Spirit, in the travail-pangs (*ὠδίνες*) through which the new birth is effected. The great saying of Christ about losing one's soul in order to find it unto life eternal would have been quite acceptable to Plotinus, who would indeed have understood it better than most modern Christians. For the repudiation of the 'me' and 'mine' which follow from it has seldom been accepted without qualification by Christian moralists. It occupies the centre of the teaching of the *Theologia Germanica* and other mystical books; but outside this school it is

rare to hear Divine justice (for example) treated from this point of view. Individualistic justice belongs to the world of claims and counter-claims which the Soul must learn to leave behind. Neither God nor Nature allows such claims, and the good man does not make them for himself. It is just here that the modern exaggeration of human individuality with its rights and claims is proving a disintegrating influence in social and national life. The ethics of militarism are as much superior to those of industrial democracy on this side as they are inferior to them in other respects.

Does this view of the self lead logically to Nirvana? If we hold that every enhancement and expansion of the personal life make it less personal, by spreading their experience over what was before external, and bringing the outside world into ourselves, would not the theoretical consummation of this process be complete absorption in the Absolute? And if finite selfhood is an illusion, how are we to explain the persistence of the illusion, which indeed seems to most of us a very solid fact indeed? And further, is it true that we are only divided from each other by differences in our interests? If two hearts could really 'beat as one,' would they lose their individuality, and perhaps therewith the possibility of love—since we do not love ourselves? These are difficult questions, which involve the whole problem of personality, divine as well as human. Lotze held that 'we have little ground for speaking of the personality of finite beings: personality is an ideal, which like all ideals is proper only to the infinite in its unconditioned nature, but to us, like every other good thing, only vouchsafed under conditions and therefore imperfectly.' On the other hand, it may be urged that personality is no ideal, but only the name for our delimitation of individual existence. 'Personality only exists because we are not pure spirits, but have a visible and sensible basis to our existence, in passions, limbs, and material conditions.' Personality can only belong to one who is not everything, but stands in relations to others outside himself. Such conditions cannot apply to the Deity. This contradiction illustrates very strongly the fact that personality, like morality, always strives to subvert the conditions of its own existence. It aspires to be all-embracing, and is potentially all-embracing; but if it could realise this aspiration, it would cease to be individual. For a person only exists as such in relation to other persons; and yet we are not fully personal (as Lotze argues) while there are

other persons over against ourselves. Plotinus says that the Soul does attain complete personality in the spiritual world, where individual *foci* are not abolished, but are each the centre of an infinite circle. And having attained this perfection, the glorified Soul does not rest in its fruition, but in complete self-forgetfulness looks up with yearning eyes to the Absolute One, in whom there are no more persons. And while thus looking, it creates unceasingly in the world of Soul.

The analogy between personality and morality is not accidental. Personality is above all things a quality which expresses the moral nature of man. Or we might say that it expresses the social nature of man. We recognise ourselves as persons very largely by contrast with the other persons whom we meet in friendship or rivalry. Thus thought first increases the illusions of separate individuality, and at last transcends them. We begin to know ourselves by realising the stubborn externality of the not-self, and then by degrees these barriers are broken down, and we find a larger self in the extension of our knowledge and sympathy. But the truest way to regard personality is as the expression and vehicle of a unitary purpose. The self is a teleological category. Here I may refer to Royce, who has stated this view most excellently. For us the self has indeed no independent being; but it is a life, and not merely a valid law. It gains its very individuality through its relation to God; but in God it still dwells as an individual; for it is a unique expression of the Divine purpose. And since the self is precisely, in its wholeness, the conscious and intentional fulfilment of this Divine purpose, in its own unique way, the individual will of the self is not wholly determined by a power that fashions it as clay is fashioned and that is called God's will; but, on the contrary, what the self in its wholeness wills is just in so far God's will, and is identical with one of the many expressions implied by a single Divine purpose, so that the self is in its innermost individuality not an independent but still a free will, which in so far owns no external master, despite its unity with the whole life of God, and despite its dependence in countless ways upon nature and upon its fellows, for everything except the individuality and uniqueness of its life. This uniqueness, he goes on to explain, is 'unique precisely in so far as it is related to the whole.' Royce also insists that 'in our present form of human consciousness the true self of any individual man is not a datum, but an ideal.'

Finally, we may say that the particularism of our experience is the cross which we have to bear, and that in the overcoming of it is the sole realisation of human happiness. Almost all unhappiness is rooted in a feeling of isolation.

The Soul and Will, or Purpose

Plotinus has been criticised for having no intelligible theory of causation. He recognises, in fact, that the mode of action of the higher upon the lower is mysterious; it is not essential that we should understand it. He concentrates his attention upon what does concern us—the return-journey of the Soul to God. The Soul lives in the consciousness of purpose; ‘it only knows itself in so far as it knows that it depends on a higher power’; it ‘turns towards’ the idea which it lives to realise. The World-Soul must live in the consciousness of the all-embracing purpose, or rather purposes, of the universe. Individual Souls while on earth have to aim not so much at what has been called ‘cosmic consciousness,’ as at a full understanding of the finite and particular purpose for which we are living our present lives. Since this purpose exists in relations, it involves very wide ramifications. The centre must be our prescribed station; to the circumference there is no necessary limit, since our life is continuous with that of the Universal Soul. Time is the form of the Will, and belongs to the activities of Soul, not Spirit. It is true that Plotinus once or twice seems to identify Will with *νόησις*; but it is only as an activity of Spirit that Will belongs to the eternal world. The idea of Will necessarily carries with it the notion of a hierarchy of value and existence, for while thought energises *in pan materia*, Will necessarily gives form to what is, for it, in the position of Matter. Soul has its own inner activities, in which its happiness consists; but as Will its activity is inspired from above, and the sphere of its activity is below itself.

In Eckhart, always a good interpreter of Plotinus, the Will is above *Verstand*, but below the higher *Vernunft*, which is the ground of the Soul.

The objection may be raised: if Soul belongs essentially to the eternal world, though near its lower limit, how can it live in unfulfilled purpose? Hegel, in the third book of his *Logic*, says that ‘in teleological activity the end is the

beginning, the consequence is the ground, the effect is the cause, a case of becoming is a case of what has become.' He adds that our belief that ends are not yet accomplished is an illusion, though on this illusion depend all our activities and all our interest in life. Hegel has been ridiculed for this theory of teleology; but the sentence quoted is by no means absurd if we take it as an attempt to describe the consciousness of *achieved ends*, or of purposes viewed, *sub specie aeternitatis*, as inseparable from their fulfilment. The higher Soul, according to Plotinus, must view 'the World as Will' much in this manner. But the temporal succession, in which purposes are worked out, is certainly not mere 'illusion.' To call it so would be to banish Time and Will from the nature of things. The activity of Will or Purpose is precisely that which links the world of ordinary experience to spiritual reality; it is the most real thing in our world. The Will effects nothing in the world of Spirit, which is the source from which the Will itself flows; in the world of Soul it is the proper life and activity in which the Soul expresses itself.

The Descent of the Soul

We have seen that Plotinus conceives the universe as a living chain of being, an unbroken series of ascending or descending values and existences. The whole constitutes a 'harmony'; each inferior grade is 'in' the next above; each existence is vitally connected with all others. But those grades which are inferior in value are also imperfectly real, so long as we look at them in disconnexion. They are characterised by impermanence and inner discord, until we set them in their true relations to the whole. Then we perceive them to be integral parts of the eternal systole and diastole in which the life of the universe consists, a life in which there is nothing arbitrary or irregular, seeing that all is ordered by the necessity that eternal principles should act in accordance with their own nature. The perfect and unchangeable life of the Divine Spirit overflows in an incessant stream of creative activity, which spends itself only when it has reached the lowest confines of being, so that every possible manifestation of Divine energy, every hue of the Divine radiance, every variety in degree as well as in kind, is realised somewhere and somehow. And by the side of this outward flow of creative energy there is

another current which carries all the creatures back toward the source of their being. It is this centripetal movement that directs the active life of all creatures endowed with Soul. They were created and sent into the world that they might be moulded a little nearer to the Divine image by yearning for the home which they have left. This aspiration, which slumbers even in unconscious beings, is the mainspring of the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic life of mankind.

This is the world-view of Plotinus. It provides an explanation of the Soul's position in the sphere of time and place. The Soul, itself a Divine principle, would be false to the nature which it shares with the other Divine principles, if it did not create a world which it could strive to fashion after the likeness of its own Creator, Spirit. 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount,' is the sum of the 'marching orders' issued by God to all His creatures. There is no necessary fall, or humiliation, or pride, or forgetfulness, in a Soul which has its temporary habitation among the tents of Kedar. Its descent into the world was not its own choice, but the ordinance of God. Whether the Soul has one life to live on earth, or more than one, its earthly course, both in its external activities and in its inward growth, is a task committed to it by God, and a part of the Divine scheme in which it is privileged to co-operate.

But Plotinus is not able to rest content with this as an adequate and satisfactory theory of temporal existence. The Soul while on earth is, after all, living in the midst of its enemies, and it is often its own worst enemy. Those instruments which, according to the theory stated above, it has itself created in order to 'mould them nearer to the heart's desire,' appear in experience to be clogs and weights which prevent it from using its wings; and too often the Soul, or the lower part of it which is in immediate contact with the world of sense, loves to have it so. When we view the condition of the majority of incarnate Souls, we cannot help asking ourselves, Would it not have been better for them to have remained Yonder in the world of spirits? Can it have been God's will that they should smirch their wings and wallow in mud here below? Must we not assume that it was pride, or curiosity, or wilfulness, that led to such a fall? So his master Plato seems to have thought; and is not such a

theory, which asserts 'original sin, the corruption of man's heart,' less superficial, in spite of all its difficulties, than the facile optimism which takes no account of evil making the Soul, as well as Spirit, impeccable, and 'the chain of our sins' only an inert resistance to a kind of magnetic attraction? Plotinus, who always seems to be thinking aloud, never conceals his real perplexities. In this case he throws out suggestions which do not pretend to be consistent with each other, and leaves it to his readers to choose between them.

The fullest discussion is in the eighth book of the Fourth Ennead. Plotinus says that often, when he has 'awaked up out of the body,' and has been conscious of the blessedness of union with God and of the untrammelled activity of the Spirit which has freed itself from the life of sense, he has returned to earth again with a sense of wonder how the Soul, which even here is capable of such experiences, comes to find itself imprisoned within a material body. Heraclitus tells us that the pendulum of life swings necessarily between contraries; that 'the way up and the way down are the same'; and that change is good in itself, bringing relief from *ennui*. This is guesswork, says Plotinus; and too obscure to carry conviction to others. Empedocles speaks of the 'law' which obliges erring souls to come down to earth, the region of 'raging discord'; but neither he nor Pythagoras makes his meaning clear. 'Poets are not obliged to speak plainly.' It remains to interrogate 'the divine Plato.' But Plato does not always use the same language about the descent of the Soul. He is emphatic in disparagement of the world of appearance; he speaks of it as the cave, the prison, the tomb of the Soul; he says that the Soul suffers a moulting of its wing-feathers (*πτερορρύησις*) by contact with Matter. And yet, if we turn to the *Timaeus*, we find this world praised as 'a blessed god'; and we are told that the Creator sent Soul into the world to make it the abode of intelligence (*ἔννοον*), as it ought to be, and with a view to its perfection. Both the Universal Soul and our individual Souls were 'sent by God,' with this intent; for it is necessary that everything in the world of Spirit should be represented also in the world of sense. It is not, then, a fault in the Soul, that it should give to the body the power of Being; 'we may care for that which is below us, without ceasing to abide in the highest and best.' In this comment upon Plato, Plotinus allows us to see clearly that his master's

disparagement of the material world is not quite to his taste. It is in the *Timaeus*, and not in the *Phaedrus*, that he finds the doctrine which satisfies him.

The Universal Soul, he proceeds, governs the world in a royal way, by simple commands; individual Souls by direct productive action (*αὐτουργῶ τινι ποιήσι*). This particular superintendence brings into activity the latent powers of Soul. It is indeed the proper nature of the Soul to set in order, rule, and govern; it has its duties to that which is beneath itself, and cannot remain always in contemplation of the world of Spirit. The Soul of the World suffers no contamination; for it does not enter into bodies, nor belong to bodies; they are rather in it. It is free, therefore, from the two dangers which Soul incurs by contact with body—that of being hindered in its spiritual life, and that of being occupied by thoughts of pleasure and pain. Individual Souls, as if desiring a more independent life than the blessed community of the spiritual world, separate themselves partially from this close intercommunion, and animate particular bodies. They live an ‘amphibious’ life (*οἶον ἀμφίβιοι*), passing from the spiritual to the sensuous and back again. Plato says, speaking mythically, that ‘God’ planted them there; but the whole movement is in accordance with nature and necessity. There is then, Plotinus thinks, no contradiction between the two theories of the descent of the Soul which are countenanced by Plato. It is permissible to say that God sent the Souls down to earth, for ‘the operation of the highest principle, even though there are many stages between, can be traced down to the end of the process.’ And yet the Soul commits two faults, one, and the greater, in ‘coming down,’ the other in entering into bodies. It does so by choice (*ῥοιῆ ἀυτξουσίω*), and because it desires to bring order into what is below. If it returns quickly, it suffers no hurt. It has gained knowledge of good and evil, and this knowledge is a good thing; it has put forth its latent powers, which would have been unperceived and useless if it had not become incarnate. Indeed, if the Soul's powers were unmanifested, it would not be fully real (*οὐκ οὕσα μηδέποτε ὄντως οὐῦσα*). In Chapter 6 (4.8.6) he traces in detail how the One could not be alone, for then nothing would exist; and how Spirit also and Soul must communicate their gifts, down to the lowest degree possible. The Soul (Ch. 7)

learns its true good by the experience of contraries; though stronger Souls can understand evil without experience of it.

In another place we read that the Soul descends into the body prepared for it, when the time comes, as if summoned by a herald. In the Second Ennead, where he is maintaining, against the Gnostics, that the Creator of this world is good, he puts the alternatives, either that the Souls are 'compelled to come down by the Universal Soul,' or that they come down willingly. In any case, he adds, the universe is so constituted that it is possible for us, while we live here, to gain wisdom, and to live the life of the Spirit while still in the flesh. In the seventh book of the Fourth Ennead he states what is perhaps his own inmost thought upon the matter when he says that the Soul has a longing to go forth and set in order 'according to what she has seen in the spiritual world' (*καθ' ἃ ἐν νῶ ἰδν*); the Soul is with child by Spirit and must give birth to her offspring; this is why she creates in the world of sense. And in the third book of the same Ennead he clearly asserts that the ascents and descents of Souls are necessary and integral parts of the universal harmony.

In spite of the beauty of several passages in which Plotinus speaks of the sojourn of the Soul in the lower world, there is a want of firmness and consistency in this part of his philosophy. We cannot blame him for recognising that man is in a 'fallen' state here; but he hesitates in answering the question whether (had it been possible) it would have been better for the Soul to have remained in the Spiritual World. He tells us indeed that the descent of the Soul into Matter is strictly parallel to the *νορὰ διέξοδος* of Spirit down to Soul and back; and to this latter process no shadow of blame can be attached. And he also admits that if the Soul had not claimed the measure of independence which involved its 'descent,' its powers would have been undeveloped, and the riches contained in Spirit would have remained for ever hidden. But the numerous passages in, Plato, in which contact with Matter is assumed to be a defilement to the spiritual principle, have an attraction for him apart from the weight of authority which they carry. It is just here that the miserable state of society in the third century warps his thought by impelling him, as many Christian saints have been impelled, to sigh with the Psalmist, 'that I had wings as a dove, for then would I flee

away and be at rest.’ There were then no obvious and practicable tasks of social reform to call the philosopher from his lecture-room, the saint from his prayers. Plotinus could not even console himself with the delusive hope of an approaching end of the world. The apocalyptic dream, which has been the strangest legacy of the later Judaism to Christianity, never consoled or troubled the mind of Pagan philosophers. They must have felt that *tempora pessima sunt*, but they could not say *hora novissima*. Deliverance, for them, was not hoped for in the future, but half-seen beyond the veil in the present. It was a different kind of *Weltflucht* from that of monastic Christianity; both alike rest on truth mixed with illusion, on faith and courage which are still not faithful and courageous enough. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, which Augustine sought for and could not find in the Platonists, puts the keystone in the arch. It is not derogatory to the Divine principle, nor injurious to it, to mingle in the affairs of a sinful and suffering world. On the contrary, the Divine is never more itself than when it ‘empties itself’ in self-sacrificing love. Nor is it necessary to the nature of pure Spirit that it should operate always without effort, and as it were with its back turned. Perfect in itself, it is nevertheless impelled by its very perfection to put forth all its strength against evils which, we must suppose, are allowed to exist for this very purpose. God reveals Himself as a suffering Redeemer; and on a lower plane the Soul does not ‘shed its wings’ but rather grows them in struggling with the impediments of an evil world. This truth was imperfectly grasped by Plotinus. But we must not misunderstand him by taking literally his metaphors of ‘abiding in her own place,’ and ‘coming down.’ No movement in space is even thought of. Spirit and Soul are everywhere and nowhere; we are in heaven whenever ‘we in heart and mind thither ascend’; we are ‘immersed in Matter’ whenever we forget God. The fault of the Soul, whether it be due to pride (*τόλμα*), curiosity, sensuality, or mere ‘forgetfulness of its Father,’ does not, for Plotinus, consist in exercising the creative activities which are an integral part of the world-order, but in treating as ends those constituents of the temporal order which were intended to be instruments. The Soul is ‘deceived’ and ‘bewitched’ by the charm of sensuous things, which bear an illusory resemblance to the world of Spirit. It beholds itself in the mirror of Matter, and, like Narcissus, falls in love with the image, and plunges in after it. The

whole duty and happiness of a spiritual being is to remember that 'its source must be also its end.' It is a stranger and pilgrim upon earth; its affections must be set on its heavenly home. But as its 'descent' implies no local or material absence from the heaven which surrounds and penetrates us always and everywhere, so its 'flight' homewards implies no local or material severance of the ties which bind us to the scene of our probation. The detachment is spiritual; and spiritual detachment is not only consistent with a beautiful and beneficent external life; it is the very condition of such a life. 'Things here' are not all shadows; even the Soul in its essential nature (*αὐτοψυχή*) is 'here, though perhaps not as we know it here.' 'There is nothing Yonder that is not also Here,' if among things Here we include the Soul and what belongs to it. But when we shut out the light of heaven from 'things Here,' all is dark, evil, and deceitful.

'Does the Soul all descend?'

Does the individual Soul 'come down' entire into the lower world, or does part of it remain above? This question, with its unfortunate though inevitable spatial imagery, raises a problem which we must try to understand. It will come home to us more easily if we try to dispense with the spatial metaphor, and ask instead, Can the Soul itself sin? Is the empirical Ego, which thinks and acts and suffers, sinning, repenting, and struggling, the true self, or a projection from it? Can the real Soul remain pure and uncontaminated, though to outward appearance the character has not been free from faults? Is there, as the medieval mystics taught, a 'spark' at the core of the Soul, which never consents to evil, a Divine nucleus in the heart of the personality, which can take no stain? Plotinus teaches that there is; and it is exceedingly interesting to find that most of his successors in the Neoplatonic school, in spite of their extreme reverence for their master, here refuse to follow him. The first to revolt against the doctrine was Iamblichus, who perhaps deserves more credit for originality than has commonly been allowed to him. There is no 'pure Soul,' he says, which remains sinless while the 'composite nature' goes astray. For 'if the will sins, how can the Soul be sinless?' Proclus, Simplicius, and Priscian all follow Iamblichus, while Theodorus and

Damascius remain true to the doctrine of Plotinus. Proclus is quite emancipated from the Platonic doctrine of *πτρορρύησις*. He makes the creation of the world, with all its imperfections, an essential movement of Spirit. 'All Spirit,' he says, 'in the act of spiritual perception (*τω νοῖν*) posits what comes next in order to itself. Its creativeness consists in its spiritual perception, and its spiritual perception in creativeness.' In the same way the Soul, in the act of exercising its proper function, which is the realisation of spiritual ideas under the form of rational and moral ends, produces the sensible world to be the sphere of its activity. It is impossible for Souls to remain always in the spiritual world; all Souls must trace the circle again and again. Clearly there is no question of sin here in the Soul's incarnation; its wanderings and returns are the pulsation of unending life. Proclus indeed gives a very clear answer to the question why the Soul comes down. 'It is because it desires to imitate the providence of the gods.' What nobler enterprise could the Soul set itself, than to hand on to other created beings the gifts which God has given to itself?

Plotinus tries to father his doctrine on Plato. It is not difficult to understand why he shrank from the idea that the Soul says good-bye to its heavenly home when it enters the body. The whole physical organism is for him something 'separable' (*χωραστόν*), no part of the real man. The Soul must maintain its connexion and communications with the spiritual world; and if the law holds that like can only be known by like, how can a Soul which has entirely 'come down' into a body live as a spirit among spirits, or have any knowledge of the spiritual world? Plotinus, as a mystic, treasures the belief that the Soul can always find God and heaven within itself. Lastly, he would have agreed with Dr. Bosanquet, that 'no activity is *ours* in which we do not remain at home as well as go abroad. Behind the activities of the Soul in the world, there must be the life of the Soul itself, to which its activities are referred, and this life is spiritual.

There is, as has been already suggested, a possible reconciliation of the two views. The Soul is a spiritual being, with its home in heaven—the heaven that is within us, even while it is in the body. But it has brought down this heaven with it into the time-process in which it energises. There is no contamination

whatever in these activities, so long as the Soul remembers that it has been sent into its present life as God's fellow-worker, 'to imitate the Divine providence,' as Proclus says. The more deeply it penetrates into the darkest recesses of the nature which has fallen furthest from God, the more faithfully it is fulfilling the Divine will, and vindicating its Divine origin. Its inmost life and being are safe, because the Soul is the child of God; but it is not allowed to remain always on the mount of vision; there are devils to be cast out in the plain below. The return-journey is rough and arduous, because the task given to great souls is great and heroic. Temporary failure is of no importance; God has all time to work in, and the Soul has all eternity in which to enjoy that rest which is another word for unbroken activity in accordance with the law of its being.

From another point of view we may be disposed to agree with Plotinus. There are many persons who from some physical defect, such as malformation of the brain, are condemned to lead a *vie manquée* here below. In their case the Soul does not seem to have 'come down' entire. In all of us there are some hindrances to a perfect life, hindrances which cannot be overcome. It is a legitimate hope that in another life the Soul may be able to act more freely.

Immortality of the Soul

THE Greeks, like the Jews, soon outgrew the barbarous notions about survival which are almost universal among savages. Both peoples, and especially the Jews, for a long period attached very little importance to the life after death; and when they came at last to make the belief in immortality a part of their religion, this belief was not even historically continuous with the ideas of primitive soul-cultus, which had their centre in the performance of pious duties to the departed spirit. This belief in a shadowy survival could lead to no doctrine of real immortality. The ruling idea in all Greek thought about life and death was that deathlessness is a prerogative of the gods. The gods, and the gods alone, are the immortals. In the national Greek religion, before it was influenced by the beliefs of other nations, there was no tendency to break down the barrier between the human nature and the Divine. Greek ethics were largely based on the maxim that man must know his place. There had no doubt been instances, so it was believed, when the souls of heroes had been admitted into the company of the gods and allowed to share their immortality; but these were exceptional and miraculous favours, which in no way affected the doom of ordinary men. The popular belief was that after death we have nothing to look forward to except the unsubstantial and unenviable condition of ghosts, 'phantoms of mortal men outworn' (βροτῶν ἴδωλα καμόντων).

The philosophical and religious belief in immortality came to the Greeks not from the Olympian religion, but from the mystical religion associated with the worship of Dionysus. It was perhaps the fundamental sanity and self-restraint of the Greek genius which led them to view with superstitious awe and amazement the manifestations of religious excitement with which they came in contact among other peoples. Even more than other nations, they were disposed to attribute the wild ebullitions of Oriental and semi-barbarous tribes to a 'Divine madness' (θίαμανία) or 'possession by a god' (ἐνθουσιασμός). It was especially Dionysus, the Thracian god, who 'makes men mad.' He was probably the god of religious ecstasy—of dancing dervishes—before he became the god of wine, which produces similar effects. For our present purpose the important thing to note is that religious

excitement produced an inner conviction or experience of the Divine origin and destiny of the human soul. The author of the *Contemplative Life*, in a remarkable sentence, says that 'the bacchanals and corybants continue their raptures *until they see what they desire.*' That ecstasy is a form of madness was fully admitted. Galen defines it as 'brief madness,' as madness is 'chronic ecstasy.' But this did not prevent the belief that a man who was temporarily 'out of his mind' might be the organ of some higher intelligence, and that in particular the gift of prophecy is thus imparted. Thus ecstasy helped to break down the barrier between men and gods, and orgiastic worship gave an empirical support to the philosophic mysticism which taught that there is no impassable cleft between the human and the Divine Spirit. The weakening of the idea of personality which followed from its apparent diremption in ecstasy promoted the belief in reincarnation and the transmigration of souls, which Euripides connects with Thrace and Dionysus. On the whole, we may say that the chief attraction of this worship was that it led up to flashes of intuition that man is immortal, like the gods. *Sentimus et experimur nos aeternos esse*, as Spinoza says. The Greeks attributed the warlike courage of the Thracians to the teaching of their religion, that death is a transition to a happier state.

It cannot be said that this mystical faith in human immortality has left many traces on Greek literature. Pindar, whose poetry as a whole does not suggest deep spirituality, professes to believe in it, and Euripides has a more genuine sympathy with Orphic ideas. The Greek mind remained, throughout its great flowering-time, positivist and humanistic. Even in Plato's *Republic* Glaucon, who is an ordinary young Athenian, answers the question, 'Have you not heard that our soul is immortal?' 'No, really I have not.'

Of the philosophers, Thales is vaguely reported to have taught that souls are immortal. But neither he nor his immediate successors can be supposed to have believed in the immortality of particular souls as such. This doctrine belongs to the Orphic tradition. In Heracleitus and Parmenides we find the two doctrines of immortality, which are implicit in mysticism, separated out for the first time. Heracleitus is the champion of the Dionysiac view that life and death follow each other in an unending cycle; Parmenides, under Orphic

influence, teaches that the Soul has fallen from the realm of light and reality to the dark and unreal world of bodily existence. This, however, is for Parmenides only 'the way of opinion'; he feels, it would seem, that the substantiality of the world of common experience is not so easily got rid of. But he will not give up the unchanging stability of eternal substance. The most interesting fragment of Parmenides is that in which he seems to enunciate, for the first time in Greek thought, the mystical doctrine of eternity as a timeless Now, as opposed to the popular notion of unending succession. 'There remains then only to give an account of one way—that real Being exists. Many signs there are upon it, showing that it is unborn, indestructible, entire, unique, unshakable, and unending. It never was, and it never will be, since it is all together present in the Now, one and indivisible.' Empedocles vehemently repudiates the philosophy of Parmenides, probably on the ground that he reduces the world of time and change to nullity, and thus leaves no pathway from appearance to reality. His doctrine of the soul's exile and wanderings is expounded in a famous fragment. 'There is a decree of Necessity, an old ordinance of the gods, everlasting, sealed with broad oaths, that whenever one of the dæmons, whose portion is length of days, has sinfully stained his hands with murder, or followed strife and committed perjury, he must wander away from the blessed gods for thirty thousand seasons, being born throughout that time in all manner of mortal forms, passing from one to another of the painful paths of life. For the power of the upper air drives him toward the sea, and the sea spews him out upon dry land; earth throws him into the rays of the burning sun, and the sun into the eddies of the air. One receives him from another, and all loathe him. Of these I myself am now one, an exile from God and a wanderer, because I put my trust in raging strife.' This is the pure Orphic doctrine, which Pindar also gives us in the second Olympian Ode. The Soul sins by separating itself from God, and after many adventures finds its way home again to Him. The fall from God is a fall from love and a choice of 'strife' in the place of harmony. The immortal Soul is said to consist of love and strife blended; the body, with its senses, is only an 'alien garment,' and perishes at death. When Empedocles describes the Soul as a ratio, or harmony, he means that the complex of discordant factors ('strife') which it contains is bound together by the principle

of unity ('love'). As regards Parmenides, it may be true that he rejects the Pythagorean doctrines which he describes, and finds truth in static materialism.

Mr. Cornford says very well that Orpheus, the ideal of the Orphic brotherhood, is 'a Dionysus tamed and clothed and in his right mind.' In the Orphic legend, it was the Maenads who tore Orpheus, the friend of the Muses, to pieces. The Greek spirit could not be content with orgiastic mysticism; the affinity between human and divine must be realised in a calmer temper, and must be made the basis not only of a cult, but of a philosophy. But the Pythagorean philosophy, like most philosophies which are also religions, attempted to combine logically incompatible ideas. Pythagoreanism is an intellectualised Orphism, in which such questions as the following press for an answer. Is the descent of the Soul part of a cosmic pulsation, a circulation of the life-blood of the spiritual world, as Heracleitus taught, or is it a thing which ought not to have occurred, and which must be remedied by the discipline which leads to deliverance? Is the Soul a part of nature, or is it radically alien from nature, so that we must live our lives here as prisoners in a hostile country, or at best as pilgrims escaping from the city of destruction to the far-off city of God? Is the individual Soul a mere mode of a universal life, or is it an eternal and indestructible substance? And is the Universal Soul a group-soul, of which individual Souls are integral parts, or is it a transcendent substance, from which individual Souls are derived, but from which they remain essentially distinct? How Pythagoras himself was thought to have combined some of the earlier answers to these questions is best shown by the summary of his doctrines preserved by Dicaearchus. He taught 'first, that Soul is immortal, then, that it is transformed into other kinds of living beings; further, that whatever comes into existence is born again in the revolutions of a certain cycle, and that nothing is absolutely new, and that all living things should be treated as akin to each other.' But the emphasis is laid on the fortunes of the individual Soul and its purification or deliverance by suffering, both here and hereafter. The Pythagoreans are in Europe the inventors of purgatory. Pythagoreanism was a mystical philosophy of immortality by death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness. An important question is whether the Pythagoreans conceived of heaven as a

timeless state, as we have seen that Parmenides did. Baron von Hügel has rightly insisted that 'all states of trance, or indeed of rapt attention, notoriously appear to the experiencing soul, in proportion to their concentration, as timeless; i.e. as non-successive, simultaneous, hence as eternal. And hence the eternity of the soul is not here a conclusion drawn from the apparent God-likeness, in other respects, of the soul when in this condition, but the eternity, on the contrary, is the very centre of the experience itself, and is the chief inducement to the soul for holding itself to be Divine. The soul's immortality cannot be experienced in advance of death, whilst its eternity, in the sense indicated, is or seems to be experienced in such this-life states; hence the belief in immortality is here derivative, that in eternity is primary.' But though the Orphic-Pythagorean aspiration to escape from the 'weary wheel' of rebirths seems to resemble the Buddhist longing for the timelessness of Nirvana, it is certain that the Pythagoreans did not envisage the future life as unconscious. In the Orphic Tablets, the Soul, when it arrives in the other world, is forbidden to approach a certain spring, which must be the water of Lethe, and is bidden to draw near another, 'by the lake of Memory.' The beatified Soul, then, remembers its past. Here the influence of popular religion may be traced. The question as to the timelessness of the Pythagorean heaven does not admit of an answer, any more than the same question about the Christian heaven. All religious eschatology is a mass of contradictions.

Although Plato has always and justly been regarded as the great champion of human immortality, it is impossible to find any fixed and definite conviction on the subject in his writings. His views of immortality, or at any rate of the arguments by which it may be established, passed through several phases. In the *Phaedo*, the whole argument is that the theory of Ideas and the doctrine of the immortality or divinity of the Soul stand or fall together. This position is rather startlingly different from the agnosticism of the *Apology*, in which Socrates says that no one knows what happens after death, but there is a considerable hope that the good man may find himself in more congenial company than he has met with on earth. It may be that if the speech was actually delivered by Socrates it does not contain those deeper convictions which he reserved for his friends. There is a hint at the beginning of the

Phaedo that Socrates has 'more convincing arguments' than those which he used when addressing his judges; and it is likely enough that he would not make confession of his mystical faith to a mixed and mainly hostile audience. In the *Meno*, an early dialogue, immortality is treated as a beautiful tale of priests and poets; but he also says that if the truth of real being (τὰ ὄντα) is in the Soul, it must be immortal. In the *Phaedo* the first argument calls in the doctrine of reminiscence, which is used to establish pre-existence. It is inferred that the Soul remains unchanged through successive incarnations. But this is only an indication of survival for a time, not a proof of immortality. Then, finding his hearers not satisfied, the Platonic Socrates argues that the *idea* of Soul is the idea of an entity unchangeable and imperishable. Or, assuming the doctrine of Ideas, we may argue that since the Ideas are simple and indiscernible, the Soul which knows them must be so too. Lastly, after disposing of the notion that the Soul is a harmony of the body, he argues that the Soul is the idea of life, and is therefore alien to death. This seems to be a fallacy; the proper inference would only be that the Soul, as far as it exists, is alive and not dead. The argument ends with the well-known 'myth' about the condition of Souls hereafter, of which Socrates feels sure that 'something like it must be true.'

In the *Republic* and *Phaedrus* he argues no longer that the Soul is immortal because it partakes in the idea of life, but that it has life, indestructible life, in its own right. 'It is not difficult,' he says in the *Republic*, 'to prove immortality, because Soul is substance, and substance is indestructible. Nothing can be destroyed except by that which corrupts its own nature; and Soul, which cannot be destroyed even by its own evil—injustice or ignorance ('a murderer is very much alive and wide awake') can still less be destroyed by any physical agency. This argument, he adds, applies to the Soul as it really is, not to the Soul contaminated by its association with flesh; this latter is like the sea-god Glaucus, who is so encrusted with limpets and sea-weed that he is hardly recognisable. In the *Phaedrus* he argues that the cause of life is a self-moving principle, which cannot perish. Every self-moving principle is Soul. By 'movement' he means any form of activity. 'Soul' is the self-determining principle in nature; and that which is self-determined can be affected by external things only indirectly, through its own will. If it is in a fallen state

here, that must be because it has chosen to make for itself an unworthy environment, suited to its own disposition. 'God is not in fault; the fault is in the chooser.' 'It is impossible to believe that the union of the immortal Soul with the corruptible body,' which only takes place because the Soul has lost its wings, 'is immortal.' If Plato had stopped here, his position would have been not unlike that of some modern philosophers, who hold that the world of reality is constituted by a plurality of independent spirits, each existing in its own right, very much as he at one time thought of the Ideas as distinct and independent spiritual entities. In fact, the Ideas and the Souls would then threaten to coalesce. But this kind of pluralism could never satisfy Plato or any other Greek thinker. The Ideas are not the Souls of individuals, but half-hypostatized Divine attributes, in which individual Souls 'participate,' a word which signifies a spiritual and non-quantitative relation. Moreover, the Ideas, as Plato came to see, are not independent of each other. They are brought together by their common condition of dependence upon 'the Idea of the Good.' Just so individual Souls derive their being from their Creator, God. Thus a new argument for immortality appears in the *Timaeus*. The higher part of Souls, at any rate, is the direct work of the Divine intelligence which created them. God cannot wish to destroy His own work, and nothing else can destroy it. Individual Souls, then, are not immortal in their own right. They are immortal because they are made by God in His own image. And it is only the higher part of the Soul of which this can be said. We are therefore left in some doubt how much of what we consider our Souls is really immortal. There is no abstract ego about which the blunt question 'to be or not to be' can be asked.

Aristotle's doctrine of immortality depends on his characteristic view of activity (ἐνέργεια). Instead of the conception of substance as the unchanging substratum of change, he holds that perfect activity transcends change and motion. Activity is the actual functioning of a substance, the nature of which is only so revealed. So far from activity being a kind of movement (κίνησις), he says that movement is imperfect activity. Activity does not necessarily imply motion or change; in the frictionless activity of God, which constitutes his happiness, there is neither. 'Change is sweet to us because of a certain defect.' The happiness of God is derived from an activity which transcends

movement. For Time is the creature of movement; it is the 'number of movement' (κινήσως ἀριθμός). The perfecting of the time-consciousness carries us into eternity, where there is no time and no movement. 'God is an eternal perfect Being, so that life, and continuous and eternal duration, belong to God, for God is all this.' As regards the immortality of the individual, Aristotle has always been considered to give very dubious support to the hopes of mankind. In fact his treatment of the subject in the *De Anima* makes it fairly clear that it is only (what we should call) the 'impersonal' Nous which is immortal.

The eschatology of the Stoics is vague and uncertain. In a sense, the Soul must be immortal, because nothing ever really perishes. Forms change, but the substance persists. The destiny of the Soul, as of everything else, is to be reabsorbed into the primal essence, which the Stoics, following Heracleitus, identified with, or symbolised by, fire. But they were not agreed whether this absorption takes place immediately after death; nor whether the individual continues to keep his individuality till the great conflagration; nor whether he falls by degrees into the Divine essence, through a course of gradual purification. Marcus Aurelius is quite agnostic on the subject. 'Thou hast embarked; thou hast made thy voyage; thou hast come to port; leave the ship. If there is another life, there are gods there, as here. If thou passest to a state without sensation, thou wilt be delivered from the bonds of pleasure and pain.' Further, Cleanthes held that the Souls of all men live on till the conflagration, Chrysippus that only the Souls of the wise live after death. In a new cycle, they taught, Souls return to earth, and the successive lives of Socrates the First and Socrates the Second will resemble each other, though (in opposition to Plato) there is no reminiscence of former lives. But in some of the later Stoics, when the prejudice against Platonism had disappeared, a real belief in personal immortality was not discouraged. Seneca believes in a heaven very like that of the Christian religion. He is able to say of death, 'That day which you dread as your last is your birthday into eternity.' Seneca is known to have been influenced by Pythagorean doctrine; but he is on Stoical ground when he adduces 'common consent' as an argument for immortality.

The Epicureans, as is well known, denied a future life altogether; but the influence of this school was declining in the generations before Plotinus. Educated men probably in most cases believed vaguely in some sort of survival, and sometimes filled in their pictures of a future life with such a jumble of eschatologies as is found in the sixth *Æneid* of Virgil, which doubtless affected Roman beliefs as much as *Paradise Lost* has affected those of Englishmen. The common people, and religiously-minded conservatives, continued to pay respect to the *Manes* of the dead, and believed that their spirits haunt the neighbourhood of their tombs. Etruria had contributed a less pleasant kind of spiritualism, that which maintained the old festival of the maleficent Lemures in May. Belief in survival was supported by numerous ghost-stories of the familiar type, such as are ridiculed by Lucian in his *Philopseudes*. In this dialogue all the chief philosophical schools, except the Epicureans, are represented as joining in the tales of apparitions. The younger Pliny believes in haunted houses. For the age of the Antonines Galen is as good a witness as any. He believes firmly in Providence, but sees difficulties in all the theories of a future life.

The Platonists of this period, with Plutarch and Maximus at their head, were the great champions of immortality. Plutarch bases his belief, as so many do in our day, mainly on the justice of God and the rationality of the world-order. He points out that even the most sombre beliefs about the torments of the damned are more welcome to the majority of mankind than the prospect of annihilation. The Epicureans deprive mankind of their highest hopes, while seeking to rescue them from their fears. In two of his works Plutarch recounts myths like those of the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, visions of judgment which, he would have us believe, are probably not very far from the truth. But the two pictures of the world of spirits are not alike. In the first, Thespesius, a bad man, who had apparently been killed by an accident, revives on the third day, and tells his experiences. He has found an Inferno and a Purgatorio, and a third form of punishment, unknown to Dante, in which carnal souls are sent to inhabit the bodies of animals. The penalties are rather ingenious. The hypocrites are turned inside out; the miser is plunged into a lake of boiling gold; the soul of the cruel man is blood-red, that of the envious is blue. In the other myth, Timarchus descends into the cave of Trophonius and sees a

revelation of the spirit-world. An unseen guide explains to him that it has four divisions. The highest sphere is that of the invisible One. Next comes the region of pure Spirit, ruled over by the sun. The moon is queen of the third kingdom, that of Soul. Below, on the other side of Styx, is the world of Matter. After death—‘the first death’—the Soul wanders between the realms of the moon and earth. ‘The second death’ finally liberates the Spirit from its association with this muddy vesture of decay. All Souls have a spark of the Divine nature in them, but in some it is clogged and swamped by the baser elements. Some Souls, when released from the body, fly straight upwards, others wander through the middle air, others fall back again to earth. Even the dæmons may incur this last fate. These and similar myths express in poetical and imaginative form the kind of theodicy which the religious mind of the Greek was at this time prepared to accept. They have an obvious resemblance to some Christian pictures of judgment; but it was not till theology came under the rigid discipline of the Roman Church that these visions of the invisible became authoritative maps of the undiscovered country and prophecies of future events.

Philo believes that ‘immortal life will receive the pious dead, but eternal death the impious living.’ The Soul is in its nature immortal; it cannot perish with the decaying body. But God, who ‘renders everything by balance and weight,’ ordains that every Soul shall reap what it has sown. The just punishment of sin is not physical torture, but the inward furies of passion and guiltiness. The true hell is the life of the wicked man. This doctrine was especially taught by the Epicureans, and is a commonplace in classical literature. But Philo holds that the punishment of living death—the state of uttermost grief, terror, and despair, is continued and increased after death. There are some for whom there is no forgiveness. Philo says nothing of the resurrection of the body, nor of the last judgment, nor of the Messianic hopes of his people.

The discussion of the Christian doctrine or doctrines of immortality does not fall within the scope of this book. But the writings of the Alexandrian school of Christian theology throw a good deal of light on Neoplatonism, and they are perhaps especially useful in relation to the problems of human immortality. Clement and Origen represent not so much Christian tradition

as the atmosphere of learned and educated thought at Alexandria in the half century before Plotinus migrated to Rome. They were loyal and, in intention at least, orthodox Christians; but there was at Alexandria none of that antipathy to secular culture which at other times and places has erected a barrier between sacred and profane studies. Origen in particular is a valuable help towards the understanding of Plotinus, both when they agree and when they differ.

The future life had from the first a far greater importance in Christian teaching than it has in Philo or any other Jewish writer. The destruction of the world by fire, the resurrection of the dead with their bodies, the great assize, the eternal reward of the good and the eternal punishment of the bad, were in the first age of the Church dogmas accepted without being subjected to philosophical analysis. While the Messianic hope lasted, the 'end of the age' seemed so near that small interest was taken in the questions whether the Soul is essentially immortal, and what will be its condition between the day of death and the general resurrection. It was only when educated Gentiles, and Jews of the Dispersion, who had never been ardent Messianists, became interested in Christianity, that the philosophical doctrine of the immortality of the Soul had to be set by the side of the religious prophecy of the resurrection of the body.

Christian teaching was unanimous in insisting that in some way or other the whole man, and not merely his ghost, is immortal. The doctrine of St. Paul had been that though flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, a 'spiritual body,' on the nature of which he does not speculate, is prepared for everyone, or for all the redeemed. The bodies of those who happen to be alive at the end of the existing order will be 'changed' into this spiritual essence. Great confusion prevailed in the early church on the whole subject. Some Christian thinkers were strangely and frankly materialistic. Tertullian says that the Soul is 'nothing if it is not body.' Souls are 'kept in the lower regions till the day of the Lord,' a vague phrase which is meant to cover his real conviction that the Soul dies with the body, and that both are raised again by miracle at the last day. This, however, he could not openly admit; and so he speaks of the Soul as remaining in a deep slumber till the day of judgment.

Justin condemns as unchristian the doctrine that the Soul is taken to heaven at the death of the body; such a view does away with the necessity of a resurrection. Theophilus will not answer the question whether the Soul is mortal or immortal by nature; 'it is naturally neither, but is capable of becoming either one or the other.' A common view seems to have been that Souls are by nature both material and mortal, but that those who receive the Spirit ($\pi\nu\hat{\nu}\mu\alpha$) live for ever. Athenagoras has the curious argument that it would be unjust for the Soul alone to suffer for sins which the body incited it to commit. Theology was in an awkward dilemma, especially about the 'intermediate state.' Either the souls of the saints and martyrs have perished, and must wait for their resuscitation till the last day, which was receding into a very dim future, or the Soul must be capable of living apart from the body, as a superior and deathless principle subsisting in its own right, which was precisely the point at issue between Platonism and Christianity.

Such was the problem which the Christian school of Alexandria endeavoured to solve. With some reservations, they adopt the Greek conception of immortality, as a natural endowment of the Soul. The spirits in prison, to whom Christ preached, could accept His message more easily because they were delivered from the burden of the flesh. After death, souls are sent to purgatory, where God, who hates no one and inflicts no vindictive punishments, chastises them till they repent. The Logos is the Saviour of all. Our life in time is essentially an education, and our education does not cease when we die. It is continued till we are fit to enjoy the beatific vision. It would be possible to quote statements of Clement which do not agree with these views. He admits frankly that he does not write down all that he thinks; there is an esoteric Christianity which is not for everybody. But it is plain that he leans towards the doctrines which Origen develops more boldly. The resurrection of the body is an otiose dogma in his creed. The body of Christ, all Christians were bound to believe, was resuscitated; but the Alexandrians did not believe that His body was like ours.

Origen takes the step which to every Greek seemed the logical corollary of belief in immortality—he taught the pre-existence of Souls. The Soul is immaterial, and *therefore* has neither beginning of days nor end of life. Further,

it must be immortal because it can think Divine thoughts and contemplate Divine truths; its love of God and desire for Him are also signs that it belongs to the eternal world. So convincing is this Platonic faith to him, that he cannot restrain his impatience at the crude beliefs of traditionalists about the last day and the resurrection of the dead. The predictions in the Gospels cannot have been intended literally. How can material bodies be recompounded, every particle of which has passed into many other bodies? To which body do these molecules belong? So, he says scornfully, men fall into the lowest depths of absurdity, and take refuge in the pious assurance that 'everything is possible with God.' We shall not need teeth to masticate food in the next world, and we need not suppose that God will provide the wicked with new teeth 'to gnash with.' The Christian doctrines of the destruction of the world by fire and of the resurrection of the dead are interpreted on the lines not of Platonism but of Stoicism. The Stoics taught that the end of a world-period is brought about by a conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις); and that creation and renovation are the work of the 'seminal Logoi.' These Stoical doctrines in truth are difficult to reconcile either with Platonism or Christianity; but Origen had a difficult course to steer between the Gnostics, who thought that the Soul can exist without a body, and the simple believers—really the inheritors of the Jewish Messianic tradition—who hoped for such a resurrection as that which Ezekiel saw in the valley of dry bones, in preparation for a new life under quasi-terrestrial conditions. So he adopted the Stoic doctrine of the 'conflagration' in a manner which we will consider presently, and maintained that in each body there is a 'seminal Logos,' a principle of individuation, which is sown in the earth like a seed, and finally produces another body true to type. But this involves him in great difficulties. Samuel in the Old Testament appears to Saul in the form of an old man; Moses and Elijah were seen at the Transfiguration in their former shapes. It is plain, then, that the Spirit is clothed with a spiritual body before the resurrection, and the general resurrection is tacitly abandoned. Moreover, though the seminal Logoi are 'forms,' the spiritual body which they create must be totally unlike the forms which we know here. If we were destined to live in the water, we should have to be changed into fish; since we are to live in the spiritual world, we must have an ethereal body, without organs or

limbs which will be useless in that state of existence. Lastly, what part of our personality is the 'seminal Logos'? It cannot be Spirit, and it cannot be Body. Is it then the Soul? But if it is buried in the earth like a grain of wheat, we are driven back to Stoic materialism. The inherent contradictions of traditional eschatology have never been more forcibly exhibited, precisely because Origen was not the man to glide over difficulties.

As for the 'conflagration' and the 'end of the age,' Origen, as is well known, follows the Stoics in teaching, quite contrary to the Christian tradition, that there will be a series of world-orders. But whereas Greek philosophy could admit no prospect except a perpetual repetition of the same alternate evolution and involution, a never-ending systole and diastole of the cosmic life, Origen holds that there is a constant upward progress. Each world-order is better than the last, and the whole process is working out a single design of the Creator. The conflagration is really a purifying fire; though, Origen adds, it would not do to tell this to everybody, since the fear of endless perdition exercises a salutary restraint on many sinners. But the truth is, that as all Spirits were created blameless, all must at last return to their original perfection. The education of Souls is continued in successive worlds.

A comparison of Origen and Plotinus, who resembled each other in their devotion to truth, and in lovableness and nobility of character, cannot fail to be instructive. In treating of the all-important subject with which we are now concerned, Origen is beset by difficulties from which Plotinus is free. He has not only to reconcile, if he can, the conflicting opinions of the great Greek philosophers; he has to solve, if possible, the most formidable problem of Christian theology—how to make room for the Jewish philosophy of history by the side of the Platonic philosophy of eternal life. He falls into contradictions, as we have seen; but it is while struggling with these that he strikes out the noble theory of a stairway of worlds, superimposed one on another not in space but in time, and leading up, by their ascending grades of perfection, to the consummation in which 'God shall be all in all.' The ascent of the Soul, which Plotinus describes as an inner process of the individual, is in Origen's philosophy writ large in the life-history of the universe itself. It is as if the Universal Soul of the Neoplatonic system were travelling, with all

individual Souls, towards the heavenly city. For Plotinus, the Universal Soul can always pray and aspire, but it seems to have no history. Whether Origen's vision of cosmic progress is tenable scientifically is another question. In the history of philosophy his theory holds a place as an interesting attempt to give the world a real history, within the Divine scheme, without at the same time admitting progress or development in God Himself.

The main passage in which Plotinus deals with the immortality of the Soul is the seventh chapter of the Fourth Ennead. There are, he says, three possible answers to the question whether the Souls of individuals are immortal. Either the individual, as such, is immortal; or he entirely perishes, or part of him perishes and another part lives for ever. Man is not a simple being, but is compounded of Body and Soul. That the body is dissoluble needs no proof. If then the body is an integral part of us, we cannot be entirely immortal. But it is a truer view that the relation of the Soul to the Body is like that of Form to Matter, or of an artificer to his instrument. The Soul is the man himself.

The Soul exists in its own right; it neither comes into existence nor perishes. It is itself the principle of life, the 'one and simple activity in living,' and as such it is indestructible. Can anyone doubt this, asks Plotinus, who considers the capacity of the Soul to behold and contemplate pure and eternal realities, to see even the world that is illuminated by Spirit, to mount up to God and gaze on His likeness within itself? Purification and education bring us to the knowledge of the highest things; and all these spiritual glories are beheld by Soul, not as things outside itself, but as things in which it shares, as its own inmost nature. The Soul has life and being in itself, and life can never die. Even the lower animals and plants, since they are sharers in Soul, must have an immortal principle in them.

The Soul, when separated from the body, no longer exercises its lower functions, which are not extinguished by death, but survive potentially only. Such faculties as opinion, reasoning, and memory are not used in the spiritual world, not because they need bodily organs, but because they are superfluous under the conditions of eternal life. Disembodied Souls may still act on the world, benefiting mankind by revealing the future in oracles.

As for the resurrection of the body, Greek thought would have been horrified at the idea that the Soul will be swathed to all eternity in what Empedocles called the 'alien garment of flesh.' Resurrection, says Plotinus explicitly, is an awakening from the body, not with the body. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption. But Plotinus does not need the hypothesis of an ethereal 'spiritual body.' He does not help out his notion of the spiritual world by peopling it with creatures in a semi-gaseous condition—an expedient which had been tried by many of the Stoics. His rejection of a bodily resurrection is a necessary consequence of the very doctrine on which he bases the immortality of the Soul. Nothing that has true being can ever perish, nor can it ever come into existence. There are no new Souls—all have existed from eternity. But there are new bodies; therefore bodies have not true οὐσία, and bodies must die. The lower Soul, he says in one place, when it has been illuminated by the higher, may accompany it after it leaves the body; but the fate of the lower Soul depends on our manner of living.

It is not easy to answer the question how far individuality is maintained Yonder. For Plotinus unity is the source and highest character of true existence, separation the very sign of imperfection and defect of reality. Soul Yonder, he says explicitly, is undifferentiated and undivided. Thus individuality in heaven is hardly a prize to be striven for. And yet Souls are Logoi of Spirits, and each represents a distinct entity in the spiritual world. This distinctness can never be destroyed. But the distinctions of Souls, though not lost, are latent in the world of Spirit. Discarnate Souls are in a sense absorbed into the Universal Soul, and help it to govern the world. Plotinus believes in and describes a blessed state in which the Souls of just men made perfect live in joy and felicity; but the condition and crown of this felicity is precisely their liberation from all that here below shuts them off from the most complete communion with each other.

The question is not whether in a state of blessedness the circumference is indefinitely enlarged, but whether the centre remains. These centres are centres of consciousness; and consciousness belongs to the world of will; it comes into being for the purposes of will, when the will has to grapple with

new conditions. It is not conterminous with life; there is a life below consciousness, and there is a life above what we mean by consciousness. The metaphor of a centre of consciousness is purely spatial, and the idea of a continuing state of consciousness is purely temporal. In the spiritual sphere the problem may be actually meaningless. Spiritual existence has an infinite richness of content; the eternal world is no 'undifferentiated jelly.' And this rich life implies reciprocal action among Souls. 'They see themselves in each other.' They have then characteristics of their own which are not merged in the unity of all spiritual life. We may further assume that since every life in this world represents a unique purpose in the Divine mind, and since all psychic ends, though striven for in time, have their source and consummation in eternity, this, the inner meaning and reality of each individual life, remains as a distinct fact in the world of Spirit.

'Mysticism,' says Keyserling, 'whether it likes it or not, ends in an impersonal immortality.' But impersonality is a negative conception, like timelessness. What is negated in 'timelessness' is not the reality of the present, but the unreality of the past and future. Time is only forbidden to devour itself. So impersonality, for the mystic, means simply the liberation of the idea of personality—it is allowed to expand as far as it can. How far that is, we admit that we do not know clearly; but the expansion is throughout an enrichment, not an impoverishment. When Keyserling adds: 'The instinct of immortality really affirms that the individual is not ultimate,' we entirely agree with him. If this were not true, how could men die for an idea?

Souls which have lived unrighteously are sent into other bodies as a punishment, and a man's *dæmon* or guardian angel may chastise his Soul when it is out of the body. Punishments are proportioned by Divine law to offences. But the notion that virtue is hereafter rewarded by pleasure and comfort, while vice is chastised by torments, is repugnant to the later Platonism. Plotinus says severely that if any man desires from a virtuous life anything beyond itself, it is not a virtuous life that he desires. This was the opinion of the Alexandrian school generally. Origen speaks with contempt of those Christians who take literally the temporal promises and threats of the Old Testament. He is ashamed to think that the heathen, whose moral sense

is more advanced than to accept such inducements to a virtuous life, may hear of the teaching which is commonly given in the churches. Origen will never believe that health, power, riches, or other advantages of the same kind, are the end of virtue; to say this would be to admit that these vulgar rewards are of greater worth than virtue itself. The bad man, says Plotinus, is doomed to dwell with shadows here and hereafter; he is punished by being deprived in his Soul and degraded into a lower place in the scale of being. We must, however, remember that for Plotinus, though not for Proclus, it is only the lower part of the Soul that can sin and be punished. This inferior part he sometimes calls 'the image of the Soul.' The higher Soul is sinless.

How far, it may be asked, does this doctrine of the Soul's destiny affect what Christian theology calls salvation? Can the Soul be lost? The answer would seem to be that the self which we call 'I' when we are thinking of our future prospects in time or eternity, may or may not be identical with the higher Soul which has its place indefectibly in the spiritual world. We gain our Souls by identifying our personal interests, our thoughts and actions, our affections and hopes, with this pure and eternal essence, which is ours if we will. The Soul of the bad man may be lost, but not the Soul which he would have called his if he had not been a bad man. The Soul which cannot be lost is that which he calls 'Spirit in Soul' (νοῦς ἐν ψυχῇ). So in Origen the Spirit seems to be an impersonal power which is and is not part of the Soul. 'If the Soul is disobedient to the Spirit, if it obstinately rebels against it, the two are separated after the Soul leaves the body.' Similarly, immortality in the vulgar sense, the survival of the empirical ego, is in a sense a goal which we may win or lose, or win imperfectly. So far as we can make ourselves, during our earthly life, instruments for the purposes of God which He intends to realise through our means, we give indestructible value and reality to our life. We are what we love and care about. 'All souls,' says Plotinus, 'are potentially all things. Each of them is characterised by the faculty which it chiefly exercises. One is united to the spiritual world by activity, another by thought, another by desire. The souls, thus contemplating different objects, are and become that which they contemplate.' There are other Souls, however, which contemplate only some vain phantom of time, soon to pass into nothingness. Those who so live are not living the life of Souls in any true sense. For it is

within our true selves that the world and we as in it are passing away. Otherwise we should not be aware of its passing.

The supreme importance of human immortality, not only for the philosophy which is the subject of this book, but for any philosophy of religion, must be my justification for offering some further reflexions upon it before ending this lecture.

Immortality may be understood in three ways. It may mean unending continuance in time; or a state which is absolutely timeless; or a state which transcends time, but for which the time-series has a meaning and importance. The popular notion of eternity is that it is a series of moments snipped off at one end but not at the other. 'This life' is a similar series snipped off at both ends. The individual comes into being at one point of time, and is 'launched into eternity' at another. His birth is commonly regarded as a quantitative addition to the sum of existence. This belief hardly belongs to philosophy. It is part of the naïve conception of human survival under conditions of time and place, which popular Christian teaching, in fear of losing the elements of strength contributed by the concrete and positive Jewish tradition, has not discouraged. It is well known how long the geographical heaven and hell held their own in popular belief—indeed they have not yet ceased to hold it. There are parts of Christendom in which it is unorthodox to deny the existence of a subterranean torture-house, which in the Middle Ages furnished a plausible explanation of volcanic eruptions. Modern astronomy has destroyed the popular Christian cosmology, and has thereby profoundly modified religious belief; but the parallel doctrine of a temporal eternity still survives, though the difficulties attending it are no less formidable. This doctrine postulates the ultimate reality of time as an unending series of moments, but destroys it again by giving no permanent value to each moment as it passes. The series is never summed and leads to nothing. Further, the popular notion of eternity destroys all essential connexion between our present lives and our future state. We are to be rewarded or punished; but these rewards and punishments are the award of a tribunal, and are only externally connected with the acts of which the tribunal takes cognizance. Nevertheless, Kant admits the idea of an unending process, adding that in the mind of God this process takes the form

of a timeless attainment. But an unending process can surely not be the symbol of any attainment whatsoever. If any purpose is involved in it, that purpose must be eternally frustrate.

The idea of eternity as timeless existence is clearly stated by Plato. He says in the *Timaeus* that while the Father was ordering the universe, He made, out of eternity, which abides in unity, an eternal image moving according to number, which we call time. Past and future are relations of time, which we wrongly ascribe to the Divine essence. 'We say that it was and shall be, though we can rightly say only that it is.' How this teaching was developed by Plotinus will be seen in the next chapter.

The problem is how to maintain this view of eternity as supratemporal existence, without either sundering the higher and lower worlds entirely from each other, or reducing the world of time and change to a vain shadow. The view of Plotinus is, as we shall see, that eternity is the sphere of the ultimately real, above the forms of space and time, in which all meanings and values, all real distinctions, are preserved, and in which the Divine attributes of beauty, goodness, and truth are fully realised and fully operative. The Soul determines its own rank in the scale of being, for it is what it loves and desires and thinks about. It is its nature to aspire to the eternal world, to endeavour to know the things of time under the form of eternity. 'Our mind, so far as it understands, is an eternal mode of thought.' We should add that so far as it loves the true, and wills the good, and sees the beautiful, it is an eternal mode of life. 'Whatever can be known under the form of eternity is to that extent eternal,' as Spinoza says again. All that participates in the attributes of the eternal world, as they are known to us—namely, goodness, truth, and beauty, can be known under the form of eternity. By participation in goodness I mean a certain disposition of the intellect, will, and feelings. Intellectual goodness is a just appreciation of values, positive and negative. Goodness of the will is a steady desire and purpose to make the positive values actual in the world around and within us, and to suppress the negative. In feeling, goodness is an emotional attraction towards all that is pure and noble and lovely and of good report. By truth or wisdom I mean the correspondence of idea with fact. Intellectual wisdom is the knowledge of the laws, physical, psychical, and

spiritual, by which the world is governed. In the will, it is consent to and active co-operation with these laws, which are its own laws, not imposed from outside, but created by the Divine wisdom itself. This consent and co-operation constitute the freedom of the will. In feeling, it is the love of God's law. By beauty I mean the expression of a true idea under an appropriate form. As in the two other cases, there is a beauty of thought, of action, and of feeling.

It is by living resolutely (as Goethe said) in the whole, the good, and the beautiful, that the Soul wins its eternal life. As we rise to this sphere, we apprehend more and more significant facts about existence. The lower facts are not lost or forgotten, but they fall into their true place, on a greatly reduced scale. Mere time-succession, as well as local position, becomes relatively unimportant. The date and duration of life are seen to be very insignificant facts. Individuality, as determined by local separation in different bodies, and not on distinctions of character, is seen to be a very small matter. On the other hand, the great unselfish interests, such as science and love of knowledge of all kinds, the love of art and beauty in all its forms, and above all goodness in its purest form—unselfish affection—are seen to be the true life of the Soul. In attaining this life it has in a sense to pass out of the normal soul-life into a higher sphere, not dominated by time: it has passed from death unto life, and enjoys eternal life though in the midst of time. Christ says quite explicitly that we can only save our Souls by losing them; that is to say, the Soul must sacrifice what seem at the time to be its own interests, in the service of the higher life which it will one day call its own. The Soul thus enters heaven by 'ascending in heart and mind' to 'the things that are above'—above itself.

The religious faith in immortality is the faith that all true values are valid always and everywhere; that the order of the universe is just, rational, and beautiful; and that those principles which exalt us above ourselves and open heaven to us are the attributes of the Creator in whom we live and move and have our being.

Transmigration of Souls (παλιγγυσία)

I shall not follow the fashion and discuss the survivals of totemism in civilised religions. Researches into the psychology of the savage are interesting to the anthropologist, and would have some importance to the student of comparative religion, if we could have any confidence that European travellers can ever really understand the mentality of primitive races. But the Platonist and Aristotelian can have no sympathy with attempts to poise a pyramid on its apex. For us the nature of religion is what it may grow into; and our starting-point, if we turn to history, must be the conceptions of early civilised races. In this case we begin with Egypt, from which, according to the tradition of antiquity, Pythagoras derived his doctrine. In Egypt the theory of transmigration united the belief in retribution after death with the old popular notion that human souls can enter into the bodies of lower animals. The Egyptian doctrine differed from the Indian in three ways. It is only the wicked who are doomed by the Egyptian theory to transmigration; the Soul ultimately returns into human form; and, though there is no escape from the cycle when once it has started, the Soul may gain deliverance after returning to human form. In India, good and bad alike transmigrate; and there is no deliverance from rebirths. Hence the Buddhist revolt against the doctrine. Empedocles, repeating perhaps the teaching of Pythagoras himself, says that the cause of transmigration is sin, that the term of it is , years, and that finally the Soul will become a god, which indeed it has always been. Pindar, another good witness to early Pythagorean teaching, holds that only the bad are condemned to transmigration, the good being admitted to a state of happiness in a place which was variously described as the sky, the air, Elysium, or Olympus.

The doctrine of transmigration offers us 'chains of personalities linked together by impersonal transitions.' Nothing survives except the bare being of the Soul, and, we may add, its liabilities. But Plato does not hold the doctrine in an uncompromising form: Souls do not all drink enough of the waters of Lethe to forget everything; the importance of 'recollection' in his writings is well known. Leibnitz thought that 'immortality without recollection is ethically quite useless'; and many others profess that such an immortality

would have no attractions for them. But others would be satisfied to know that they will live on in the great spiritual interests with which they identified themselves; they could say with Browning, 'Other tasks in other lives, God willing.' It is not continuity of consciousness which they prize, but perpetuity of life amid the eternal ideas.

The doctrine has found many supporters in modern times. The philosophy of Krause is on this and some other subjects of special value to a Neoplatonist. Pfleiderer, who writes most sympathetically about Krause, thus sums up his views about the life of the Soul. 'Man's whole vocation is likeness to God in this life, or the unfolding of his godlike essence in his own distinctive way as an independent active being, according to his three faculties, true knowing, blessed feeling, and holy willing and doing. That man may know himself aright it is first of all necessary that he should distinguish aright what he is as spirit and what he is as body, and how these two are related to each other. As spirit, man knows himself in the light of his knowledge of God to be an eternal, unborn, and immortal rational being, destined to fulfil in infinite time his divine destiny as a finite spirit an infinite number of times in an infinite number of periods or life-centres. The souls of men upon the earth are the spirits living together on the earth with individual bodily natures; they form a part of the infinite spirit-realm of the universe, which suffers neither increase nor diminution, but lives in and with God as an eternally perfect organism of all the infinite number of spirits. Each separate spirit enters by union with a body upon one of its infinite number of life-periods, develops itself to its maturity, and then declines to the point of returning to its unity in God. But this death of one life-course is at the same time a beginning, a second birth into a new life-course.' The doctrine of reincarnation was taught by the Manicheans and Cathari, by Giordano Bruno and the theosophist Van Helmont. Swedenborg believed that men who lead bestial lives will be reincarnated in the forms of the animals which they resembled in character. Goethe and Lichtenberg dallied with the idea of transmigration more or less seriously; Hume declared that metempsychosis is the only doctrine of the kind worthy of attention by a philosopher; Lessing speaks respectfully of it, without being himself a believer; the friends of Lavater at Copenhagen taught the doctrine, quite in the manner of Pythagoras, but with extravagancies of

their own. Lavater himself had been King Josiah, Joseph of Arimathæa, and Zwingli. The apostle Peter had come to life again as Prince Karl of Hesse. Schopenhauer says of metempsychosis, 'Never will a myth be more closely connected with philosophical truth.' Ibsen and Maeterlinck are more recent supporters of the belief.

Plotinus, as we have seen, says that the true awakening of the Soul is the awakening *from* the body, not with the body. Successive incarnations are like one dream after another, or sleep in different beds. It is a universal law that the Soul after death goes where it has longed to be; it 'goes to its own place,' as was said of Judas. 'Particular Souls are in different conditions. Soul, as Plato says, wanders over the whole heaven in various forms. These forms are the sensitive, the rational, and even the vegetative (φυτικόν). The dominating part of the Soul fills the function which belongs to it; the other parts remain inactive and external. In man the inferior parts do not rule, but they are present; however, it is not always the highest part which rules; the lower parts also have their place. All parts work together, but it is the best part which determines our Form as man. When the Soul leaves the body, it becomes that faculty which it has developed most. That is why we ought to flee to the higher, so as not to fall into the life of the senses, through association with sense-images, nor into the vegetative life, through abandoning ourselves to the pleasures of uncleanness and greediness we must rise to the Universal Soul, to Spirit, to God. Those who have exercised their human faculties are born again as men; those who have lived only the life of the senses, as lower animals. The choleric become wild beasts, with bodies suitable to their character; the lustful and greedy become lascivious and greedy quadrupeds. The merely stupid become plants; they have lived like vegetables in this life, and have prepared themselves only to be turned into trees. Those who have been too fond of music, but otherwise have lived pure, become singing birds; unreasonable tyrants, if they have no other vice, are changed into eagles. Dreamy speculators who occupy themselves with high things above their capacities become high-flying birds. The man who has practised the civic virtues becomes a man again; or if he has been indifferently successful in this pursuit, he is reborn as a social animal, a bee for instance.

Plotinus is obviously trying his hand at a Platonic myth in this passage, and he seems, for once, to be slightly amused at the picture which he is drawing. In another passage he shows how distributive justice may be exercised among those who are reincarnated as men. Cruel masters become slaves; those who have misused their wealth become paupers. The murderer is murdered himself; the ravisher is reborn as a woman and suffers the same fate. As for the Souls which have freed themselves from the contamination of the flesh, they dwell 'where is reality and true being and the divine, in God; such a Soul as we have described will dwell with these and in God. If you ask where they will be, you must ask where the spiritual world is; and you will not find it with your eyes.'

It is plain, I think, that Plotinus does not take the doctrine of reincarnation very seriously, as scientific truth. He is inconsistent. Sometimes he speaks of a purgatory for disembodied Souls; sometimes the bad (as we have seen) are reborn as lower animals, and sometimes retribution in kind falls upon them in their next life as human beings. Porphyry and Iamblichus both refuse to believe that human Souls are ever sent to inhabit the bodies of beasts and birds; and these two do not contradict Plotinus lightly. The fact is that Plotinus is not vitally interested either in the question of individual survival in time, or in that of rewards and punishments. As Dr. McTaggart says of Hegel, 'he never attached much importance to the question whether Spirit was eternally manifested in the same persons, or in a succession of different persons.' Dr. McTaggart adds that 'no philosophy can be justified in treating this question as insignificant.' But perhaps Plotinus and Hegel would agree in answering that it is not so much insignificant as meaningless.

Dr. McTaggart is a strong believer in reincarnation, and his chapter on 'Human Immortality' is very instructive. In comparing the philosophy of Lotze with that of Hegel, he blames the former for making his God 'something higher than the world of plurality, and therefore something more than the unity of that plurality.... There is no logical equality between the unity which is Lotze's God and the plurality which is his world. The plurality is dependent on the unity, but not the unity on the plurality. The only existence of the world is in God, but God's only existence is not in the world.'

No clearer statement of the fundamental difference between Hegel and Plotinus could be made. The view of Plotinus is precisely that which Dr. McTaggart blames in Lotze. Dr. McTaggart proceeds to say that on this theory any demonstration of immortality is quite impossible. That is to say, unless I am as necessary to God as God is to me, there can be no guarantee that I have any permanent place in the scheme of existence. We have already seen how Plotinus would answer this. Souls have οὐσία—real being; but their being is derived, like the light of the moon. They are not constituent factors of God, or of the Absolute, but are created by Him. It is an essential attribute of God that He should create, but His creatures are not parts of His being. Souls are indestructible and immortal because they possess οὐσία there is a qualitative difference between creatures that have οὐσία and those that have it not. But the empirical self, about whose survival we are unduly anxious, is a compound which includes perishable elements. And this composite character is found all through nature; even trees have a share in Soul, in true being, and in immortality. Our immortal part undoubtedly pre-existed, as truly as it will survive; but the true history of a Soul is not what Aristotle calls an episodic drama, a series of stories disconnected from each other, or only united by 'Karma.' The true life of the Soul is not in time at all. Dr. McTaggart says that 'the relations between selves are the only timeless reality.' Plotinus would certainly not admit that relations can be more real than the things which they relate; and he would also deny that Souls find themselves only in the interplay with other Souls. On the contrary, it is only in self-transcendence that the individual finds himself; and he is united to his fellows not directly but through their common relationship to God. Dr. McTaggart asks, 'How could the individual develop in time, if an ultimate element of his nature was destined not to recur in time?' But what ground have we for supposing that the destiny of the individual is to 'develop in time,' beyond the span of a single life? It is a pure assumption, like the unscientific belief in the perpetual progress of the race, so popular in the last century.

But a Neoplatonist might arrive at reincarnation by another road. Since the nature of spiritual beings is always to create, is not the Orphic aspiration to escape from the 'grievous circle' after all a little impious? Must not work, which means activity in time, be its eternal destiny? The active West, on the

whole, sympathises with Tennyson's 'Give her the wages of going on and not to die.' Why should not the 'saved' Soul 'go forth on adventures brave and new?' The Orphic and Indian doctrine of release seems to be condemned by the Neoplatonic philosophy, when it has the courage to follow its own path. The beatified Soul has its citizenship in heaven; but it must continue always to produce its like on the stage of time. In what sense these successive products of its activity are continuous or identical with each other is a question which we must leave to those whom it interests. To us their only unity is in the source from which they flow, and in the end to which they aspire.

The Spiritual World

Νοῦς—νόησις—νοητά

WE have already noticed the peculiar difficulty of finding equivalents for the most important terms in the philosophy of Plotinus. It was unfortunate that we could find no word except 'Matter' for ὕλη which is above all things immaterial. For λόγος there is no single English word. It is quite different from the Logos of Christian theology, whom the Christian Platonists invested with the attributes of the Plotinian Νοῦς. 'Creative activity' comes near the usual meaning of the word in Plotinus. ψυχή again is often nearer to 'Life' than 'Soul.' Even more serious is the difficulty of finding a satisfactory equivalent for Νοῦς. Modern writers on Neoplatonism have chosen 'intellect,' 'intelligence,' 'thought,' 'reason,' 'mind,' 'das Denken.' All these are misleading. Plotinus was neither an intellectualist (in the sense in which Hegel has been called an intellectualist or 'panlogist'), nor, in the modern sense, an idealist. He does not exalt the discursive reason (διάνοια or λογισμός) to the highest place. These are the activities proper to Soul, not to the principle higher than Soul. The discursive reason has its function in separating, distributing, and recombining the data of experience. For this reason, its world is not wholly real. But οὐς beholds all things in their true relations without the need of this process. And we shall see in the course of this chapter how far he is from the view of modern idealism, that things are real when and because they appear to a mind which creates and contains them.

By far the best equivalent is Spirit. It need not cause any confusion with πνῦμα, for this word is very little used by Plotinus, and does not stand for anything important in his system. It has the right associations. We think of Spirit as something supremely real, but incorporeal, invisible, and timeless. Our familiarity with the Pauline and patristic psychology makes us ready to accept Spirit, Soul, and Body as the three parts of our nature, and to put Spirit in the highest place. St. Paul also teaches us to regard Spirit as super-individual, not so much a part of ourselves as a Divine life which we may share. In all these ways, Νοῦς and Spirit correspond closely. Then, if we call

Νοῦς Spirit, τὸ νοητόν (or τὰ νοητά) must be 'the spiritual world.' It is more difficult to find words for the verb νοῖν, and the substantive νόησις. They are usually translated 'to think,' and 'thought,' which is misleading. 'To think' is λογίζσθαι, and 'thought' is διάνοια, both of which belong to the life of Soul. We must be content with 'spiritual perception' or 'intuition' for νόησις, and 'perceive,' 'behold,' or 'know,' for the verb. It will be convenient sometimes to retain the Greek words in the text.

In these three—Spirit, Spiritual Perception, and the Spiritual World—we have the trinity in unity in which reality consists. It is true that Soul also is real; but it is real because it can rise into the world of Spirit, and be active there, without ceasing to be itself. For Plotinus, reality is the spiritual world as known by Spirit, or Spirit as knowing the spiritual world. Here only we find the fully real and the completely true. Most commentators on Plotinus have not emphasised this nearly enough. They have made either the Absolute, or Soul, their starting-point, and have taken one of these as the pivot of the whole system; or they have opposed the spiritual and sensible worlds to each other as if Plotinus meant them to be two real worlds set over against each other. They have left untested the popular errors that Platonism is a philosophy of dualism, and Neoplatonism a philosophy of ecstasy, and have neglected the numerous passages which should have taught them that both these statements are untrue. We shall not understand Plotinus unless we realise in the first place that οὐσία corresponds nearly to what in Mr. Bradley's philosophy is called reality as opposed to appearance, and, secondly, that this reality is neither thought nor thing, but the indissoluble union of thought and thing, which reciprocally imply each other. Οὐσία is defined as that which belongs to itself, or is an essential part of that which belongs to itself. It possesses Bradley's two criteria of reality—that is to say, universality and inner harmony. It needs neither supplementing nor rearrangement: it exists eternally and in perfection. Spiritual perception (νόησις) is the apprehension of incorporeals; it is a seeing of the invisible. It is the activity of Spirit; a phrase which might suggest to a modern idealist that νοῦς creates the νοητά. But this is certainly not the meaning of Plotinus. He says, quoting the Timaeus of Plato, that 'Spirit sees the Ideas which dwell in real being.' What Plato calls the living being (ζῶον) is not νοῦς but νοητόν. Spirit sees the Ideas

which dwell in the spiritual world. Are these Ideas external to the Spirit which sees them? If they were, it could only possess the images of them, not the Ideas themselves; there would be no direct contact between thought and thing. But we cannot admit this; for though doubtless Spirit and the spiritual world are distinguishable (ἕτερον ἐκάτερον), they are not separate or separable. Plato, when he says that νοῦς sees the νοητά, means that it possesses them in itself. The νοητόν is νοῦς, but νοῦς in a state of unity and calm, while the νοῦς which perceives this νοῦς abiding in itself is an energy proceeding from it. In contemplating it, it becomes like it, and 'is its νοῦς because it perceives (νοῖ) it.' It is in one aspect νοῦς, in another νοητόν. The Spiritual World, he says in another place, cannot be outside Spirit, for then what link could unite them? How then could we distinguish νόησις from αἴσθησις, which only beholds types and images of reality? Can we be satisfied to say that justice, beauty, and goodness, the Ideas which Spirit beholds, are strangers to itself? On the other side, the Spiritual World (νοητά) must either be deprived of life and intelligence, or it must have Spirit. In the latter case, the νοητά make up one thing with Spirit, and this thing is 'the first Spirit' (ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς), 'Are not then Spirit, the Spiritual World, and Truth all one?' If we wish to preserve the reality of νοῦς, νοητά, and truth and to make true knowledge possible, we must concede to νοῦς the intimate possession of reality. 'Therefore Spirit, the whole of reality (=τὰ νοητά), and truth, are one nature.' Yet the relation between them is not bare identity. 'The perceiving Spirit must be one and two, simple and not simple.' That is to say, if νοῦς and νοητά were diverse, they could not come together; if absolutely one, there could be no thought. 'Each of them (of the νοητά) is Spirit and Being, and the whole is all Spirit and all Being. Spirit by its power of perception posits Being, and Being, by being perceived, gives to Spirit perception and existence. The cause, both of spiritual perception and of Being is another,' i.e. their common principle, the One. The relation between them is one of essential identity actualised under the form of essential reciprocity. That the two sides of reality are of equal rank, and not one derived from the other, is plain from what has been quoted, and from several other passages. 'Spirit, in beholding reality (τὰ ὄντα) beheld itself, and in beholding entered into its proper activity, and this activity is itself.'; 'Spirit perceives, not as one that seeks, but as one that already possesses.' 'The being

of Spirit is this beholding ' of itself in the spiritual world. Because this activity is the very essence of Spirit, its activity and actuality are identical. Νοῦς and νόησις are one; and νόησις is the activity of νοῦς. The νοητῶν, however, are the product not of νοῦς but of the One. The whole spiritual nature (νοητὴ φύσις) proceeds, like the rays from the sun, direct from the One, and not through the medium of νοῦς. 'Reality is that which is seen, not the act of seeing.' If Plotinus were a modern idealist, there would be no need of a super-essential all-transcending principle. Monism would be achieved, or rather aimed at, as in so many modern systems, by whittling away one of the terms. We have seen how far Plotinus is from attempting this solution.

These quotations are perhaps enough to show that the famous dictum, 'the spiritual world is not outside Spirit' (οὐκ ἔξω νοῦ τὰ νοητῶν), does not bear the sense which it would have in the mouth of a post-Kantian idealist. But the problem puzzled Plotinus' own disciples. Porphyry wrote an essay in refutation of the doctrine which he attributed to his master, hoping in this way to induce Plotinus to explain himself more clearly. But Plotinus only smiled, and asked Amelius to 'remove the misunderstanding.' A controversy followed between Amelius and Porphyry, which resulted in the submission and recantation of the latter. These essays have of course perished; but in dealing with so important and difficult a point in the Neoplatonic philosophy, it may be worth while to let Plotinus explain his doctrine more at length.

'We must not regard the objects of spiritual perception as things exterior to Spirit, nor as impressions stamped upon it, thus refusing to Spirit the immediate possession of truth; to do so would be to condemn the Spirit of ignorance in spiritual things, and to destroy the reality of Spirit itself. If we wish to maintain the possibility of knowledge and of truth, and the reality of existence, and knowledge of what each thing is, instead of confining ourselves to the simple notion of its qualities, which only gives us an image of the object, and forbids us to possess it, to unite ourselves with it and become one with it, we must allow to true Spirit the possession of everything. So only can it know, and know truly, and never forget or wander in search, and the truth will be in it, and reality will abide with it, and it will live and know. All these things must appertain to the most blessed life; for where else shall we find the

worthy and the noble? On this condition only will Spirit have no need of demonstration or of faith; for so Spirit is itself, and clear to itself; so Spirit knows that its own principle [the One] is above itself, and that that which comes next after the One is itself; and none else can bring it any surer knowledge than this about itself—it knows that it exists in very truth, in the spiritual world. Absolute truth, therefore, agrees not with any other, but with itself; it says nothing outside itself; it is, and what it is, that it says.”

The same argument is developed in the ninth book of the Fifth Ennead, which I will translate in an abbreviated form. ‘Spirit is not only in potentiality. It does not become knowing after being ignorant; it is always active and always Spirit. It exercises its power from itself and out of itself, which implies that it is what it knows. We must not separate the knowing Spirit from the objects of its knowledge; it is only our habit in dealing with the things of sense that makes us prone to make separations in the world of Spirit. What then is the activity of Spirit, in virtue of which we may say that it is the things which it knows? Plainly, since Spirit has real existence, it knows and posits reality. Spirit therefore is all that really exists....The objects of spiritual knowledge cannot be in the world of sense, for sensible objects are only derivative. The νοητά existed before the world; they are the archetypes of sensible things, and they constitute the true being or reality of Spirit....Spirit is the first lawgiver, or rather it is itself the law of being. This is the meaning of the saying ‘To know is the same as to be ’; and the knowledge of immaterial things is identical with the things known....Thus Spirit and the real world are one. Spirit contains all things in itself, not locally, but as it possesses itself. Yonder all things are together and yet remain distinct, as the Soul may possess many sciences without confusion....

‘ The sciences (ἐπιστήμαι) which exist in the reasoning Soul are some of them of sensible objects (though this kind of knowledge ought rather to be called opinion): these are posterior to the facts, being images of them; others are of spiritual things; and these are true sciences, coming from Spirit into the reasoning Soul, and not concerned with the objects of sense. In so far as they are scientific knowledge, they are identical with their objects, and have within them both the spiritual object and the faculty of spiritual vision. For the Spirit

is within; it is always accompanying with itself, and always active, though not needing to acquire anything, as the Soul does; but Spirit stands in itself and is all things together. But the objects in the spiritual world were not brought into being by Spirit; God, for example, and movement, did not come into existence because Spirit thought them. So when it is said that the Ideas are νοήσις, if it is meant that the spiritual world only exists because Spirit thought it, the statement is untrue. The object of this knowledge must exist before knowledge of it.

‘Since then νοήσις is knowledge of what is immanent in Spirit, that which is immanent is the Form (ἴδος) and (ἰδέα). What is this? Spirit and spiritual being (νορὰ οὐσία). Each idea is not different from Spirit, but each idea is Spirit. And the whole of Spirit is all the forms, and each form is each Spirit, as the whole of science is the sum of its theories; each theory is a part of the whole, not separated locally but having its power in the whole. This Spirit is in itself, and possessing itself in constancy is the plenitude of things. If Spirit had been thought of (προπνοῖτο) as prior to being (i.e. before the νοητὰ existed), we should have had to say that the activity and the thought of Spirit produced and perfected all existences; but since we are obliged to think of being as prior to Spirit, we must insist that all existences are in the preceding Spirit, and that activity and νόησις come to existences, as the activity of fire joins itself to the essence of fire, so that the existences, being immanent in Spirit, have Spirit as their activity. But being is also activity; the activity of both then is one, or rather both are one. Therefore Being and Spirit are one nature, and so are all existences and the activity of being and the corresponding Spirit; in this sense, νοήσις are the form and shape of being and its activity. In separating by our thought being and Spirit, we conceive of one of them as prior to the other. For the Spirit which separates is in fact another; but the unseparated and unseparating Spirit is being and all things.’

This last chapter is as important as it is difficult. Spirit as it is in itself does not attempt to separate itself from the spiritual world; we go wrong as soon as we think of the two as subject and object, still more if we think of them as Form and Matter, or as creator and created. But ‘our Spirit,’ which is Soul exercising its highest faculties, cannot help using the categories of subject and object. We

cannot help thinking of an eye which sees something—and the eye ‘cannot behold itself’; or of a mind taking knowledge of something which it certainly did not create by thinking. And so we involuntarily ‘conceive of one as prior to the other’; we either think as subjective idealists, or we affirm that ‘the spiritual world is outside Spirit.’ The Spirit that ‘neither divides nor is divided’ is no part of us; we pass into it only when we ‘awake out of ourselves’ and find ourselves in the presence of the One which is beyond existence. For Spirit, when it is absolutely undivided and undividing, is indistinguishable from the Absolute.

A few more quotations may be added, though my contention has already been fully proved. ‘If Spirit-in-itself (αὐτονοῦς) were the creator, the created would have to be inferior to Spirit, but close to Spirit and like Spirit; but since the creator [the Absolute] is beyond Spirit, the created must be Spirit. But why is the creator not Spirit? Because νόησις is the activity of Spirit.’

‘Thus νοῦς and νοητὸς and Being (τὸ ὄν) are one and the same thing, and this is the First Being: it is also the First νοῦς possessing all realities (τὸ ζῶντα), or rather identical with them. But if νοησις and νοητόν are one and the same, how will τὸ νοοῦν be able in this way to know itself? (πῶς νοήσις ἐαυτό). For νόησις will, as it were, embrace τὸ νοητόν, or it will be identical with it, but one does not yet see how νοῦς can know itself. This is the answer. Νόητόν and νοητόν are the same, because νοητόν is an activity (ἐνέργεια) and not a mere potentiality (δύναμις); life is not a stranger to it nor adventitious; τὸ νοῦν; is not an accident to it as it would be to a stone or lifeless body; and νοητόν is the First Reality (οὐσίᾳ ἡ πρώτη). Now if νοητόν is an activity, and the first activity, it must be the noblest νόησις, and objectively real (οὐσιώδης νοῦς). And as this νοῦς is completely true, and the first νοῦς, it must be the first νοῦς. It is not νοῦς only potentially, not can it be distinguished from νόησις; otherwise its essence (or reality, τὸ οὐσιώδες αὐτοῦ) would be only potential. If then it is an activity and its essence (οὐσία) is activity, it must be one and the same with this activity. But Being and νοητόν are also one and the same with their activity. Therefore νοῦς, νοητόν, and νόησις are all the same thing. Since the νόησις of νοῦς is τὸ νοοῦν and τὸ νοοῦν is νοῦς, νοῦς will know itself. It will know, (νοήσι) by the νόησις which is itself, the νοητόν which is also

itself. It will know itself, both as being νόησις and as being νοητόν; and the νόησις with which it knows is also itself.’

Plotinus, it will be seen, is not content with making Spirit and the Spiritual World correlatives implying each other. He asserts something like what Christian theologians, in discussing the attributes of the Trinity, and the two natures of Christ, called *πριχώρησις* and *communicatio idiomatum*. Spirit and the Spiritual World flow over into each other. In another chapter he says: ‘νόησις is the activity of νοῦς. But νόησις seeing τὸνοοῦν, and turning towards it and perfecting itself, as it were, from it, is itself indeterminate (ἀόριστος) like vision (ἄψις), but is determined by τὸνοοῦν. For which reason it has been said that forms and numbers come from the indeterminate Dyad and the One; and forms and numbers are νοῦς. Wherefore it is not simple, but many, and exhibits a synthesis, but within the spiritual order, and it sees many things [i.e. it sees things as distinct from each other, not as one]. It is itself νοητόν, and also νοῶν; so that it is two. There is further another νοητόν after it. But how does νοῦς arise from τὸνοοῦν? Thus, the νοητόν remaining in itself and needing nothing, differing in this from the seeing and knowing faculty, is not without consciousness, but is self-contained and independent, and has complete power of self-discernment; it has life in itself and all things in itself, and it knows itself by a kind of self-consciousness in an eternal stability and intuition, other than the intuition of νοῦς. If then anything comes into being, while the νοητόν remains in itself, this comes from νοητόν when the νοητόν is most itself. So then, when νοητόν remains in its proper character, that which comes into being comes from it, without any change in the νοητόν. When then it remains as νοητόν, that which comes into being comes as νόησις; and this being νόησις and deriving its power of thought from its source (νοοῦσα ἀφ’ οὗ ἐγέντο)—for it has none other—becomes νοῦς, another νοητόν, as it were, an imitation and image of the first.’ In this difficult passage the order of priority is νοητόν, νόησις, νοῦς. But this precedence is only possible because Plotinus begins by making νοητόν include νόησις and νοῦς. In 5.9.7 he says that the ideas (ἔϊδη) are not strictly νοήσις ‘or if they are, we must give τὸνοοῦν a priority before this νόησις.’

These quotations show one thing very clearly—that Plotinus is no slave to his own technical terms. They are not rigid. They seem to throw out ‘organic filaments,’ as if to prove the doctrine that the whole is implicit in each part. It would be a mistake to stiffen classifications which their author has deliberately left fluid. He was well aware that sharp distinctions and hard boundary-lines belong to the logical faculty (διενοια), not to νοῦς, and that these methods are inappropriate when we are considering the stage above the discursive intellect. In the relations of νοῦς and νοητες we see a complete reconciliation of the One and the Many, of Sameness and Otherness; and if this is so, it is manifestly impossible to give distinct characters to Spirit on the one side and the Spiritual World on the other. Reality is not to be identified either with Thought, or with a kind of transcendental physical world which is the object of Thought; nor can we arrive at it by forming clean-cut ideas of these two, and saying that they are ‘somehow’ joined together. Reality is eternal life; it is a never-failing spiritual activity; it is the continual self-expression of a God who ‘speaks, and it is done, who commands, and it stands fast.’ The dialectic may, as Greek philosophy claims, lead us up to the threshold of the eternal world and beyond it; but within that world a principle prevails, which logic is powerless to analyse; for the Divine Ideas penetrate each other, and defy every attempt to treat them as intellectual counters.

The Ideas

The usual word for the Ideas is ἴδη, which I have frequently translated 'Forms.' In one place, as we have just seen, Plotinus says that the νοητὰ immanent in νοῦς are the ἴδη, and νόησις the ἰδέα. It is easier to say what the Ideas or Forms meant to Plotinus, than what they meant to Plato. Plato's Ideas are explained as self-existing substances by Herbart, Pater, and Zeller. Stallbaum, Richter, and others say that they are 'God's thoughts.' Others again, as Kant, Trendelenburg, Lotze, Achelis, and many recent writers, interpret them as a kind of notions of the human mind. Perhaps the soundest discussion of the subject may be found in Burnet and A. E. Taylor, who are in substantial agreement. It can hardly be denied that Plato's own views changed considerably. In the Republic the theory of Ideas is no longer a hypothesis, as in the Phaedo, but an ascertained truth. There are Ideas of justice, beauty, and the good; these are always the same, and are an unity of particulars. Our knowledge of the Ideas is clearer than of sensible things; they are independent of the senses; they are known by a faculty which is variously called γνώμη, γνώσις, ἐπιστήμη, νόησις νοῦς, τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμις. The verbs used are ἰδῖν, ἄπτουθαι, θεασθαι, all expressing immediate and infallible knowledge. The Idea of the Good is 'beyond existence'; it is 'the cause of science and truth, as known.' Students of the lower sciences 'dream about real existence (τὸ ὄν), but cannot see it in their waking moments.' The queen of the sciences is dialectic (which means metaphysics), because it deals with real existence. The Idea of the Good is the final cause of the universe; it enables Plato to bridge over the chasm between the One and the Many. Plato's objective idealism is most clearly defined in the Symposium and Phaedo; in the Republic it is less uncompromising. In the Theaetetus the categories take the place of the Ideas, which means that the Ideas are tending to become forms of thought. As Plato grew older, the vision faded; he attached more importance to the dialectic and less to intuition. He seems now to allow movement in the Ideas corresponding to progress in the thinker's mind. In the Sophist it is suggested that true being is that which has the power of acting and being acted upon (ποῦν καὶ πάσχειν). But the definition is not explicitly accepted by the Eleatic stranger, who seems to represent Plato himself. At the

same time, the value of outward impressions is increasingly recognised, and the notion of being is extended to individual things. Being is sometimes absolute, sometimes relative, while not-being is always relative, since it arises from a disharmony of notions. Thus not-being is not one of the categories (γένη): Error is a mistake as to how the Ideas are related to each other. The doctrine at this stage is that the sensible world is built up according to the Ideas which exist in the mind of God, and which pass thence into our minds by the observation of concrete particulars. In the *Timaeus* the Ideas are the models according to which the Demiurge brought order into the world.

But how can an individual Soul 'participate' in an Idea? The difficulty for Plato was not that the Idea is a concept, and the Soul a self-contained Person; for neither of these statements is true. The difficulty arises from the residuum of materialism in the notion of Soul; and this Plato is trying to shake off. Is the Idea divided among the Souls who participate in it? This is impossible; but if not, we must cease to think in terms of extension and quantity; we must rise to the conception of a spiritual world, which has its own laws. The doctrine of Ideas belongs to the philosophy of mysticism; and in Plato, as he grew older, the logician and metaphysician gained at the expense of the mystic. If the mystic in him had been slain, he might have turned his Ideas into mere concepts, the creations of the human mind, as some of his modern interpreters have done for him; but as soon as he sees his argument leading him in that direction, he breaks out in revolt against it. 'In heaven's name, are we to believe that movement and life and soul and intelligence are not present in the ultimately real? Can we imagine it as neither alive nor intelligent, but that, grand and holy as we hold it to be, it is senseless, immovable, and inert?' In the *Parmenides* the theory of Mentalism is explicitly raised. Socrates suggests that the puzzle about the unity and plurality of Forms may be solved if the Forms are taken to be only 'thoughts in Souls'—i.e. as merely subjective, as we say. On this theory, the common nature which unites the particulars in any class, and the relations between these particulars, are the work of the human mind, and have no existence except such as is conferred by our thought. The refutation of this suggestion is so concise and complete that it may be quoted. 'Can there be individual thoughts which are thoughts of nothing?' 'Impossible.' 'Thought must be of something?' 'Yes.' 'Of

something which is, or which is not?' 'Of something which is.' 'Must it not be of a single something, which thought recognises as attaching to all, being a single form or nature?' 'Yes.' 'And will not the something which is apprehended as one and the same in all, be an Idea?' 'From that again there is no escape.' 'Then if you say that everything participates in the Ideas, must you not say that everything is made up of thoughts, and that all things think; or else that there are unthinking thoughts?' 'The latter view is no more rational than the previous one.' A thought must always be a thought of something; it cannot create its own object by willing to think of something which does not yet exist. An Idea is not the process of thinking, but the object of thought. There was never a time when Plato did not hold this view. The Eleatic disputants in this dialogue are not combating the existence of Forms as the objects of knowledge; they are only raising a doubt whether Socrates has succeeded in establishing a connexion between the Ideas and the objects of sense. Parmenides and Zeno wish to discredit sense-perceptions (καταβέλλιν τας αἰσθήσεις), and they maintain that Socrates has not succeeded in rehabilitating them. Plato's object in this dialogue seems to have been to suggest that Socrates' theory of 'participation' needed more clearing up, a view which he certainly held.

Critics like Natorp, who have fathered their modern psychologism on Plato, seem to me to have introduced great confusion into the study of Platonism. Plato certainly did not hold that νοητὰ depend for their reality on αἰσθητὰ, nor that Soul alone is real. The statement that the Ideas are 'simply force,' is in my opinion very far from Plato's manner of conceiving them, at any period of his life.

If the Ideas are not general concepts, and not the activity of our own Souls, what are they?

Professor Taylor objects to saying that the Ideas are 'thoughts of God,' and does not believe that Plato ever held this opinion. He has successfully demolished the notion that subjective idealism can be found in Plato; and he argues that we cannot escape from the objections which have proved fatal to this philosophy by supposing the world to consist of Divine, and not human thoughts. He quotes from Bolzano a paragraph which expresses his own view

and, as he thinks, Plato's; 'It follows no doubt from the omniscience of God that every truth, even if it is neither known nor thought of by any other being, is known to him as the omniscient, and perpetually present in his understanding. Hence there is not in fact a single truth which is known to no one. But this does not prevent us from speaking of truths in themselves as truths in the notion whereof it is nowise presupposed that they must be thought by some one. For though to be thought is not included in the notion of such truths, it may still follow from a different ground, i.e. from the omniscience of God, that they must at least be known by God, if by no one else....A thing is not true because God knows it to be true; on the contrary, God knows it to be true because it is so. Thus, e.g. God does not exist because God thinks that He exists; it is because there is a God that God thinks of Himself as existing.' Professor Taylor illustrates this argument by the example of the discovery of Neptune by Adams and Leverrier. Neptune of course existed long before there were any human astronomers, and if there were no astronomers on other planets within sight of Neptune, it existed none the less, though observed by no finite intelligence. He proceeds, 'And though it may be reasonable to believe in an omniscient God who did know about the perturbations [of Uranus] and their cause before we suspected either, it is pure nonsense to say that God's knowledge of the existence of Neptune is what we mean by the existence of Neptune. For we should then have to say that what Adams and Leverrier discovered was not Neptune but the fact that God knew about Neptune.' I do not think that Bolzano's words represent at all accurately the relation between the Divine mind and its objectified thoughts, as conceived by Plotinus. Bolzano, in his polemic against subjective idealism, seems to me to have fallen into precisely the error which Plotinus requested Amelius to explain to Porphyry, the error of placing the νοητὸν 'outside νοῦς: God does not know of Neptune because He has observed a planet revolving round the sun in an outermost ring; He knows of Neptune because He made Neptune, and without His sustaining will Neptune could not exist for an instant. Plotinus would say that the real Neptune is neither a lump of gases and minerals, nor a notion in the mind of God, but a realised θώρημα, in which it is impossible to separate the creative will from the thing willed. The are hetypal Neptune is of course (to the Platonist) immaterial.

The Neptune of science is not an independently existing congregation of atoms, but an imperfect likeness, constructed and perceived by Soul, of the archetypal Neptune. Soul, as Proclus says, is the living world. It is not thought as opposed to thing; it is its own world, as Spirit is its own world. It is just within the confines of real existence (οὐσία); but it is more loosely integrated than the world of Spirit, and therefore the particulars which compose it are not, when taken apart, what they seem to be. The world of Soul—the κόσμος ζωτικός—is real; but it cannot be pulled to pieces without admixture of error. The planet which Leverrier observed is part of the κόσμος ζωτικός. Science finds that it takes its place in an ordered universe, and infers that God (or νοῦς) knows of Neptune, which means that Neptune really exists.

Platonism is not consonant with the fashionable pluralism, which divides the world into minds, which exist for themselves, and things, which exist only for minds. Against this philosophy it is worth insisting, with Eucken, that a spiritual world is not the same thing as a world of spirits, which these thinkers are content to leave in a non-spiritual environment. The difficulty of deciding whether (e.g.) a lobster has an objective existence—or wherever else the pluralist chooses to draw his arbitrary line—is enough to discredit the whole theory. Nature knows no sharp dividing line between conscious and unconscious life; the distinctions between animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic, are apparently breaking down under modern investigation. But these difficulties do not affect Platonism or Neoplatonism. No Platonist ever supposed that there is a separate Soul or an Idea of a pebble or a pen. ‘All things are in various degrees endowed with Soul’—so Plotinus says with Spinoza, but this kind of panpsychism is very different from pluralistic idealism, which is often disguised materialism. We do not get rid of materialism by merely banishing the word. Proclus, instead of ‘all things think,’ says ‘all things pray.’

The doctrine of Plotinus is that so far as every thought in Spirit is also an eternal Form of being, all the thoughts of Spirit are Ideas. Spirit embraces all the Ideas, as the whole its parts. Each Idea is Spirit, and Spirit is the totality of the Ideas. The Kingdom of the Ideas is the true reality, the true beauty. They are unity in diversity, and diversity in unity. Their number cannot be infinite,

though it is immeasurably great, for beauty and order are inseparable from limitation, and the number of possible Forms is not, strictly speaking, infinite. There are as many Ideas Yonder as there are Forms Here. The only objects Here which are not represented Yonder are such as are 'contrary to nature.' There is no Idea of deformity, or of any *vie manquée*.

Chaignet thinks that the Platonic doctrine of Ideas is 'not organic' in the system of Plotinus, and that it is perhaps only retained out of respect for Plato. It is certainly not easy to distinguish the Ideas from Spirits, and from the creative Logoi. Zeller says that in the *Enneads*, as in Philo, the Ideas 'verdichten sich' into Spirits, which are not merely thoughts in the great Spirit, but 'spiritual Powers, thinking Spirits.' The relation between the Ideas and *Noûs* cannot, he adds, be more closely defined 'without bringing to light the contradiction which vitiates Philo's doctrine of Powers—namely, that of ranging substances under each other, sometimes in the relation of logical subordination, some times in that of parts to a whole.' Kirchner blames Zeller for identifying the Ideas with Spirits, and the two words are certainly not interchangeable. Perhaps the most important thing that can be said about the *ἰδέη* of Plotinus is that he has found in the creative Reason which is at once in our minds and the formative principle in the world, the bridge between thought and thing. Spirit does not create the spiritual world; but it does create the ordered universe as known by the reason, and the reason which knows it.

Categories (*γένη*) of the Spiritual World

In Plato's later dialogues the Categories, as has been said, tend to displace the Ideas. The first table of Categories is in the *Theaetetus*, repeated and enlarged in the *Sophist* and *Parmenides*. The first place in all enumerations is given to οὐσία (*τὸἴναἰδόν*) and its opposite τὸμὴ ἴναί. The Same and the Other, Similarity and Dissimilarity, are also common to the three. The One and the Many are dropped in the *Sophist*; Permanence and Change (Stability and Movement) are omitted in the *Theaetetus*. 'Not-Being' is to be dropped, as it turns out to be only another word for 'Otherness.' These *γένη* are not identical with the Ideas. There is no place among them for Truth, Beauty, or

the Good. The older intuitive vision gives way to an analytic investigation of a given universe. Lastly in the *Timaeus* we have almost the Aristotelian list.

Aristotle's *Categories* have been very severely criticised by modern philosophers; and Plotinus subjects them to an acute and hostile examination in the first book of the *Sixth Ennead*. It is the more remarkable that the later Neoplatonists, except Syrianus, passed over Plotinus' work, and preferred the Aristotelian treatment. The fact is, I think, that, as Ravaisson says, 'Les genres de Plotin sont des attributs inséparables de l'être; c'est ce qu'il nomme, par une fausse analogie avec les catégories d'Aristote, les premiers genres de l'être.' I am much more disposed to agree with Zeller, who minimises the importance of the *Kategorienlehre* in Plotinus, than with Steinhart and Richter, who find in it the key to the whole system. The long discussion of the *Categories* in the *Sixth Ennead* seems to me, at any rate for our purpose in these, the least interesting part of the whole book.

There are, according to Plotinus, three pairs of categories, each pair consisting of opposites, which are reconciled in the spiritual world. These are, Spirit and Being, or Thought and Thing (νοῦς and ὄν); Difference and Identity (ἐτρότης and ταυτότης); Stability and Movement, or Permanence and Change (στάσις and κίνησις). But he is not quite consistent about this classification. Sometimes he omits the first pair and makes four categories; sometimes, as in the important passage which follows, he enumerates five, leaving out νοῦς. 'We must lay down these three categories, since Spirit knows each of them separately—Being, Movement, and Stability. In knowing them, it posits them, and in being thus seen, they exist. Those things the existence of which is bound up with Matter, have not their existence in Spirit; but we are now speaking of the non-material, and of non-material things we say that their existence consists in being known by Spirit. Behold then pure Spirit and look at it earnestly, not with your bodily eyes. You behold the hearth of Reality (οὐσίας ἐστίατ) and a sleepless light shining in it; you see how it stands in itself, united and yet divided; you see in it permanent life and spiritual vision which is directed not on the future but on the present, or rather on the eternal Now and the always present, and on itself, not on anything external. In this spiritual vision or knowledge reside activity and movement; in the fact that it

is directed on itself reside reality and being (ἡ οὐσία καὶ τὸ ὄν); for in this self-knowledge both subject and object are known as truly existing, and that on which it rests is known as truly existent. For activity directed on itself is not Reality (οὐσία), but the source and object of the activity is being (τὸ ὄν); for being is that which is seen, not the act of seeing; but the act of seeing also possesses being, because its source and object is being. Now since being is in act and not in potentiality (ἐνργίαι, οὐ δυνάμι), it connects the two terms again and does not separate them, but makes itself being, and makes being itself. Being is the most stable of all things, and the foundation of stability in all other things, and possesses nothing that is not absolutely its own. It is also the goal of spiritual knowledge, as a stability that had no beginning, and the starting-point of it, as a stability which never began to move; for movement cannot arise from movement nor end in movement. The Idea (ἰδέα) further belongs to the category of stability as being the term of Spirit, but Spirit is its movement; so that all things are one, movement and stability, and are categories which exist in all beings. Each of the beings posterior to these is a definite being, a definite stability, and a definite movement.' He goes on to say that if we analyse these three categories, Being, Stability, and Movement, we shall find that they are both identical and different; so that we must add Identity and Difference, making up five categories in all. In this chapter Plotinus follows Plato's Sophist, without introducing clearness into a very obscure argument.

Plotinus elsewhere distinguishes carefully between Being (ὄν) and Reality (οὐσία). 'Being and Reality are different. Being is found by abstraction from the others (i.e. the other two pairs of categories); but Reality is Being together with Movement, Stability, Identity, and Difference.' We have seen that Being (ὄν) is identical with νοητόν in abstraction from νοῦς. Therefore it has the same relation to νοῦς as στάσις to κίνησις. But it is surely an error to make νοῦς and νοητόν a pair of categories by the side of the other two pairs. For the antithesis of Stability and Movement, and of Identity and Difference, belongs to the sphere of discursive reason, the Soul-world. They only become categories of Spirit when their contradictions are harmonised by being taken up into a higher sphere. But when they thus cease to be contradictories, they cease to be themselves. That which is always in motion and yet always at rest,

is neither in motion nor at rest, in the common sense of the words. It is true that motion and rest are ideas which imply each other; but the very fact of their real interdependence, combined with their apparent mutual exclusiveness, stamps them as imperfect ideas, which are transcended rather than reconciled in the life of Spirit. Change and Permanence are ideas which belong obviously to that range of thought of which time and place are necessary forms. Identity and Difference are contradictory relations which, if they can both be asserted of the same terms, prove that the terms have been imperfectly understood, or wrongly divided. But the unity in duality of νοῦς and νοητόν belongs to the sphere of real existence. It is only transcended in the Absolute, which is 'beyond existence.' The third pair of categories, we may venture to say, ought to be Thought (διάνοια) and its Object, Which present the same kind of difficulties as the other two pairs. And all three pairs are not strictly γένη τοῦ ὄντος, but forms of thought in the Soul-world.

The Same and the Other (ταυτόν—ἕτερον)

External nature appears to us as a collection of objects in juxtaposition, with no inner connexion. The main task of Soul, and above that, of Spirit, is to systematise and unify. In a sense Identity and Difference are not so much categories by the side of the other pairs, as (taken together) the relation in which each member in the other pairs stands to its correlative. Or we might say that the antithesis between Identity and Difference is the most fundamental, and that until we understand how it can be transcended, we cannot hope to understand how Change and Permanence, Thought and its Object, can be unified in the world of Spirit.

The great doctrine which Plotinus expresses as the reconciliation of 'the same' and the 'other,' is that all the barriers which break up experience into fragmentary and opposing elements must be thrown down, not in order to reduce life to a featureless mass of undifferentiated experience, but in order that each element inexperience may be realised in its true relations, which are potentially without limit. Otherness and sameness help to define and emphasise each other. The whole, as Plotinus tells us repeatedly, is in each

part. Individual Spirits are not parts of the one Spirit. They exist 'in' each other; each is the whole under a particular form. The universal is implicit in the particular. The νοητα are 'many in one and one in many and all together.' They are not separated in the slightest degree from each other; the whole Spirit lives in each centre of life. There must be differentiation; otherwise no communion of Spirits, no interaction on the spiritual plane, would be possible. It would not be enough that distinctions exist on the plane of Soul; for then Spirit would need Soul in order to come to life. 'Spirit itself is not simple,' anymore than the Soul.

Aliotta says, 'The perception of differences by the Soul is not ethical valuation, or æsthetic, or any kind of preference, but qualitative as opposed to quantitative difference. Without qualitative difference all individuality is illusory.' The question here arises whether there can be a recognition of qualitative differences without ethical or æsthetic valuation, or any kind of preference. I am inclined to think that there cannot. I believe that judgments of value enter necessarily into every cognitive process of the Soul. It seems, however, to be true that in contemplating the eternal or spiritual world we are able to recognise different aspects of perfection, without assigning comparative values to them. No kind of preference need be felt. In the spiritual world the different aspects of perfection illuminate and do not interfere with each other. In that world, as Plotinus says, 'all is each, and each is all, and infinite the glory.' 'It is necessary to recognise that there must be diversity as well as unity in the intelligible world. In the same way Christian theology, which is just Platonism applied to the interpretation of the beliefs of the first Christians, came to recognise that the relation of God to the world and to man cannot be thought out, unless in the Divine nature itself there is diversity and not merely abstract unity.' Spirit is simple in the sense that it is not discernible; but for that very reason it has everywhere a rich content, which becomes explicit and differentiated in the Soul which proceeds from it. It is only when the creative power reaches the limit of its activity that we find simplicity, in the sense of poverty of content; in Spirit the principles of all differentiation are contained. It is absolutely necessary to trace back the sources of plurality, on the lower planes of being, to the inner nature of Spirit itself. Spirit not only engenders all things; it is all things. Though it does not

become anything that it was not, Spirit is in a state of constant inner activity; it 'wanders among realities (ἐν οὐσίαις πλανᾶται), on the field of truth, remaining always itself.' This 'field of truth' (πεδῖον ἀληθείας) is everywhere complex and diversified; it is also subject to incessant movements. There is no standing still; for where there is standing still, there is no thought (or spiritual perception); and where there is no thought, there is no being. Reality and νόησις are identical; the journeys (πορῆαι) which Spirit makes in 'the field of truth' are all 'through life and living things,' and all within its own domain. Plotinus deals with the same subject in the Fifth Ennead. 'The being of Spirit is seeing.' But seeing involves duality; and if the seeing is also an activity, it involves plurality and movement as well. Thus Spirit is one in many, and many in one. We cannot even say 'I am this' without acknowledging at the same time identity and difference. If the relation is one of absolute identity, we no longer have νόησις, but that immediate and unthinkable union which belongs to the Absolute. The element of plurality belongs not only to the νοητῶ, but to νοῦς which perceives them. We may speak of νός as well as of νοῦς.

Movement and Stability(κίνησις and στασις)

This antinomy is another form of the last. That which changes and yet remains the same, that which moves and yet abides unshaken, is at once 'the same' and 'another' in its relation to itself. Greek philosophy had recognised long before Plotinus that Movement and Stability are complementary ideas, which imply each other. As Kant says, 'Only the permanent and substantial can change.' It is only in a being which 'participates' in eternity that change has any meaning. Recent writers of the activist school have ignorantly represented Plato as the prophet of pure staticism. This is very far from the truth. In the Theaetetus and Parmenides first appears the notion of (κίνησις) as change, as well as movement in space. The distinction of these two kinds of movement is introduced as a discovery of Socrates. The starting-point of this theory was the recognition of (κίνησις) as a principle of being, justified in the Phaedrus, mentioned as known in the Theaetetus, and reconciled with the opposing principle of στασις in the Sophist. The inclusion of these two under one primary kind is (says Lutoslawski) one of Plato's most wonderful anticipations of modern philosophy. In the Sophist he repudiates staticism with something like indignation.

It will be remembered that for Plotinus Spirit is perfect activity. Activity is defined by Bradley as self-caused change. He proceeds to argue that nothing can be active without an occasion or cause, which makes it, so far, passive, not active; that activity implies finitude, and a variety of elements changing in time. His conclusion is that activity is only appearance. Plotinus would admit that the activity which consists in changes in time is only appearance; but he would differ from Bradley by saying that the idea of non-temporal activity is not meaningless. That this idea is wholly intelligible he would perhaps not venture to assert; the activity which we can understand is an imperfect likeness of spiritual activity, and it needs to be supplemented by harmonising the idea of Stability with that of Movement. Plotinus does not like Aristotle's statement that 'Movement is imperfect activity' (ἀτλής ἐνέργια); because there is Movement in the world of Spirit.' If no diversity awakened Spirit into life, Spirit would not be activity.' It does not follow that there is Time in the spiritual world; for 'Movement does not need Time, which only measures the

quantity of Movement.' Movement, in the spiritual as in the phenomenal world, implies the operation of will; not, however, in order to become activity, but in order to accomplish something from which it is quite distinct. 'It is not itself made perfect, but the object at which it aimed.' Movement in the spiritual world is not antithetic to stability; its activity is not a development of itself into something that it was not before. The purposes of Spirit are realised, by its creative power, as processes involving temporal succession. In these processes, subject as they are to time and place, Movement is of course opposed to Stability, though the two are necessary counterparts of each other. But this movement, which might truly be called imperfect activity (ἀτλής ἐνέργια), is also imperfect movement, if we compare it with the movement of Spirit, which does not need Time (οὐ δῖται χρόνου).

Plotinus recognises that continuous and regular movement is a form of stability. The real change would be for the machine to stop. Are we then denying the truth of the kinetic aspect of reality when we postulate unvarying laws of nature? This thought is the starting-point of the vitalistic philosophies of the present day, such as that of Bergson. It is said that if reality consists of unvarying general laws, illustrated by transient manifestations which in no way affect the eternal steadfastness of the laws, the time-process is without significance, and the universe has no history. Our answer is that history is always a description of the changes within some one finite unitary whole, and that these changes have a meaning only when regarded as states of some abiding reality which persists through and in them all. They are the expression of the life and purpose which constitute the unity of the whole in which they are embraced. In the life of Soul there is no standing still, but continual movement, and movement with a meaning. Within any unitary whole there may be developments of what we call laws as well as in the processes which exhibit their working; for the laws are only the methods of operation adopted by the Universal Soul, and are uncontrolled by any necessity. Whether, as a matter of fact, the laws of nature are uniform, is to be decided by observation. But when we consider the subordination of the individual to the larger processes of the world-order, it is most improbable that our private volition should be able so to modify the course of events as to give the world the appearance of a 'wild' system, which by its unaccountable behaviour

administers shocks even to its Creator, as William James would have us believe.

In spiritual things, Plotinus says, persistence (στάσις) is their form (μορφή) and determination (ὄρισμός). When we remember the superiority of Form to Matter in his system, we seem here to find an assertion of the superiority of persistence to change, though Movement is a property of Reality no less than Stability; and this, as has been said, has been regarded by many as a characteristic of Platonism. So Eucken says, 'The ultimate basis of life is here always taken for granted; in the full development of this, human activity has an important task assigned to it, but at the same time an impassable goal. When this goal is reached, activity ceases to be a mere striving, and is transformed into a state of rest in itself, into an activity fully satisfied by its own exertion and self-expression.... Hence the chief problem of life is life itself, as the complete unfolding and effective co-ordination of its own nature; as the poet says, the important thing is to become what one is.' He contrasts this conception of life, as something which we should see as perfect, if we knew all that it contains, with what he considers the Christian view of life as in need of redemption and radical change. In Christianity, he says, eternity enters into time, and 'temporal happenings thus gain a value for the deepest ground and the ultimate fate of reality.' But the Plotinian view is nearer to Christianity than the pseudo-scientific doctrine of perpetual progress which often passes for Christian. In the Christian scheme a term is set, not only to the activities of each individual, but to the world-order itself. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away,' not into nothingness, but into a state in which no further development and change can be asserted. Both individual souls and any larger scheme which has a unitary value in God's sight, have their places in the eternal order, when their task is done here on earth. Nor is it the Christian doctrine that 'temporal happenings have a value for the ultimate fate of reality.' The ultimate fate of reality never hangs in the balance; God does not evolve, and suffers no loss, though He may feel sorrow, in the failures of His creatures. Temporal events determine the ultimate fate of the souls that animate bodies, but they do so not as external happenings, but as the outward expression of that upward or downward movement of the Soul which conducts it to its own place. A man is not damned for what he does, but

for what he is. Modern critics of Platonism seem to assume that if progress has its preordained limit, it must be illusory. This is the result of forcing eternity into the category of time, and envisaging it as an endless series. This is, no doubt, the kind of immortality that many look for—‘the wages of going on, and not to die.’ But this is not eternal life either in the Platonic or in the Christian sense; nor is it the destiny which science allows us to anticipate for the individual, or the race, or the planet itself. We are not in a position to assert or deny that there may be other tasks for the Soul in other lives. But if there are, that is not eternal life, but at best a kind of image of it, a mode of appearance.

The problem of change and permanence is so important, and is so vitally connected with the debates of modern philosophy, that a few more reflections may be offered upon it. Plato, like Spinoza, was deeply impressed by the timeless immutability of mathematical truth, which therefore became for him the type of the unchangeable eternal Ideas. The Soul which is in communion with the unchangeable must have itself an un-changeable element. So Kant postulated an extratemporal ‘noumenal’ self as a background for our knowledge of the temporal, and T. H. Green argued that knowledge of succession in time can only arise for a mind which is not itself involved in the time-series. It is because the Soul is in its deeper self outside the time-series that it regards the fleeting shows of phenomenal life as either vain or tragic, and identifies itself willingly with those parts of experience which can defy ‘the wreckful siege of battering days.’ But I believe that what the Soul values in these objects of experience is not their extreme longevity, but their quality of everlastingness. Hegel bids us ‘banish from our minds the prejudice in favour of duration, as if it had any advantage as compared with transience,’ a counsel which perhaps goes too far, since ability to go on at the highest level is surely a mark of superiority; but it brings out the main point, that there may be more of the eternal in fifty years of Europe than in a cycle of Cathay, in a life of thirty years greatly lived than in a selfish or vacuous existence prolonged to extreme old age.

*A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,*

*Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.'*

Belief in the persistence of effort through unending æons does not console us for the perishing of the finest flowers which that effort produces; nor does it justify the ambition to produce new values, which will be equally transient. Faith can be satisfied with nothing short of Plotinus' confidence that 'nothing that truly is can ever perish'; and this belief compels us to assert the existence of an eternal, unchangeable background, of which an unending temporal series would be at best only a symbol. Even the most definitely historical and ethical religions, such as Judaism, are rooted in faith in an Eternal Being, who is 'God from everlasting, and world without end, before the mountains were brought forth or ever the earth and the world were made.'

Bradley has shown very clearly that progress and evolution can only be movements within a unitary whole. 'There is of course progress in the world, and there is also retrogression; but we cannot think that the Whole moves either on or backwards. The improvement or decay of the universe seems nonsense, unmeaning or blasphemous.'

The difficulty is to prevent the two aspects of reality, Change and Permanence, from falling apart again after we think that we have reconciled them. Plato himself, in the Parmenides, anticipates one of the criticisms which have been most often made against his philosophy. 'If God has this perfect authority, and perfect knowledge, his authority cannot rule us, nor his knowledge know us, nor any human thing.' This is an objection of Parmenides, the Eleatic, to the doctrine of Ideas as expounded by the young Socrates. If the Ideas are objective existences independent of phenomena, the two systems must be cut off from each other. Plotinus, as we have seen, holds that the world of the Ideas is by no means one of stationary immobility; though there are, strictly, no inner changes in spirits. In the world of Soul the Ideas are polarised, not only into a multiplicity of forms, but into a series of successive states within unitary processes. It is, in fact, only by understanding this soul-world, the world of the One and Many, that we can rise to

understand the world of the One-Many, the world of Spirit. In making this ascent, we by no means exchange the kinetic for the static view of reality; but we are strengthened in our conviction that the whole meaning of movement and change is to be sought in the direction taken by the movement, and in the values which the movement, taken as a whole, succeeds in realising. These values are themselves above the antithesis of rest and motion; they belong to the eternal world. To us, who are exposed to the stress of conflict, they abide in a haven of peace and calm beyond our reach, and it is no small part of the longing which we have to enter into that haven, that in it each particular task is in turn finished and then kept safe for ever. For the Soul, it may be, there is no doffing of its armour, but only a temporary repose. But a life's battle, if won, is won for ever. Its unitary purpose, if achieved, has its home secure in the world of real being. Thus our attitude towards life should be that of Browning's Rabbi ben Ezra.

'Therefore I summon age To grant youth's heritage, Life's struggle having so far reached its term; Thence shall I pass, approved A man, for aye removed From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon Take rest, ere I be gone Once more on my adventure brave and new; Fearles and unperplexed When I wage battle next, What weapons to select, what armour to endue.'

The moods of the religious mind vary. Sometime we say with Faber:—

*'O Lord, my heart is sick,
Sick of this everlasting Change;
And life runs tediously quick
Through its unresting race and varied range.
Change finds no likeness of itself in Thee,
And makes no echo in thy mute eternity.'*

Sometimes we agree with George Macdonald:—

*'Blame not life; it is scarce begun;
Blame not mankind; thyself art one;
And Change is holy, O blame it never;
Thy soul shall live by its changing ever;*

*Not the bubbling change of a stagnant pool,
But the change of a river, flowing and full;
Where all that is noble and good will grow
Mightier still as the full tides flow,
Till it join the hidden, the boundless sea
Rolling through depths of eternity.'*

But on the whole surely Keyserling is right when he says that if life had no temporal end it would not be 'ein ewiges Sein, but ein perpetuelles Werden.' And this would mean that we must live for ever in the consciousness of an unfulfilled purpose, doomed never to attain our heart's desire.

'The whole system of Eckhart' (says Delacroix) 'is a long and passionate effort to place life and movement in Being itself, and to spread the Supreme Being over the multiplicity of the acts the synthesis of which can alone constitute it. Hardly has he affirmed the absolute reality of Being, when he occupies himself in penetrating its depth and discerning its richness. His God is not an immobile God, but the living God; not abstract Being, but the Being of Being. The reality of God is his work, and his work is, before the birth of things, his own birth.'... 'So in developing created things in the world of becoming, Spirit makes them enter into eternity. In God progress and regress, coming and returning, are closely united; they are at bottom one and the same act, the act by which God penetrates himself and finds himself wholly in himself. Thus divine movement is at bottom repose. Becoming is eternal; that is to say, its change alters nothing in eternity. God is immobile in himself and so abides.'

Ruysbroek thus unites and distinguishes Work and Rest in God. 'The Divine Persons who form one God are in the fecundity of their nature ever active; and in the simplicity of their essence they form the Godhead and eternal blessedness. Thus God according to the Persons is eternal Work; but according to His essence and perpetual stillness, He is eternal Rest. Now love and fruition lie between this activity and this rest. Love would work without ceasing, for its nature is eternal work with God. Fruition is ever at rest, for it dwells higher than the will and the longing for the well-beloved, in the well-beloved, in the divine nescience and simple love...above the fecundity of nature.'

If, before leaving this subject, we turn for a moment to the æsthetic aspects of Change and Permanence, we observe the curious fact that the beauty perceived by sight is mainly stationary, while that perceived by hearing requires change. The most exquisite note of a prima donna, if prolonged for two or three minutes, would compel us to stop our ears; but there is no satiety in gazing at a fine landscape or a noble picture, until the optic nerves become fatigued. The Greeks, though they did not undervalue music, were on the whole more impressed by the beauties of visible form; their greatest triumphs were in sculpture, an art in which they remain unapproachable. It may not be an accident that in this race of sculptors we find also our pioneers in the cult of 'eternal form, the universal mould.' On the other hand, the Jews, in whom the sense of visible form is singularly blunt, have been great musicians, and also strong upholders of the belief that it is in history that God reveals Himself.

The Spiritual World as a Kingdom of Values

The whole discussion of the Categories of the spiritual world in the Enneads leaves me dissatisfied. It seems to me that when we reach the plane of the eternal verities, the κόσμος νοητός, we should leave these dialectical puzzles behind, and recognise that what we now have to deal with is a kingdom of absolute values. The whole philosophy of Plotinus is an ontology of moral, intellectual, and æsthetic values. These values are not merely ideals; they are the constituents of Reality, the attributes under which God is known to man. Whether they should be called categories is a question which does not matter much; they are the qualities which all spiritual things possess, and in virtue of which they hold their rank as perfect being.

The highest forms in which Reality can be known by Spirits, who are themselves the roof and crown of things, are Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, manifesting themselves in the myriad products of creative activity. Things truly are, in proportion as they 'participate' in Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. These attributes of Reality, which, so far as can be known, constitute its entire essence, are spiritual; that is to say, they belong to a sphere of supra-temporal

and supra-spatial existence, which obeys laws of its own, and of which the world of common experience is a pale copy.

I venture to think, audacious as the suggestion undoubtedly is, that Plotinus ought, when dealing with the spiritual world, to have made a clean sweep of the Platonic and Aristotelian categories, and to have said that the three attributes of οὐσία are Goodness, Truth, and Beauty—ἀγαθότης, ἀλήθεια, and κάλλος. Let us examine his reasons for refusing to do this; for he does not leave the question unconsidered. 'Why do we not include among the first categories the Beautiful, the Good, the Virtues, Science (true knowledge), and Spirit? If by the Good we mean the First Principle, that of which we can affirm nothing, but which we call the Good because we have nothing else to call it, it cannot be a category; for we cannot affirm it of anything else.... Besides, the Good is not in existence, but beyond existence. But if by the Good we mean the quality of goodness, we have shown that Quality is not one of our categories. The nature of Reality is good, no doubt; but not as the First Principle is good; its goodness is not a quality, but an attribute. But, it will be said, you have told us that the One has all the other categories in it, and that each of these is a category because it is common and is seen in many things. If then the Good is seen in every part of Reality or Being, or in most of them, why is it not included in the first categories? The reason is that it is present in different degrees; there is a hierarchy of goods all depending on the First Good.... But if by the Good which is in Being we mean the natural activity which draws it towards the One, and say that this is its Good, to gain the form of Good from the One, then the Good in this sense will be activity directed towards the Good, and this is its life. But this activity is Movement; and Movement has been named as one of the categories.'

The answer to these various objections is that in the first place when we call Goodness an attribute of νοῦς and νοητά, we certainly do not mean the Absolute, 'which we only call the Good because we have nothing else to call it,' but Goodness in its proper sense; in the second place that this Goodness is not a quality, but a constitutive attribute of Reality as such; in the third place that the hierarchy of degrees in Goodness is also a hierarchy in degrees of Reality, the two being inseparable; and lastly that though the striving towards

the Good is itself a good for the Soul, the good of the Spirit is not a κίνησις, but a form of activity ‘within the field of truth,’ in which movement and stability are reconciled. The whole argument is hardly worthy of Plotinus.

Proceeding to the Beautiful, he uses the same arguments with no better effect. Of ἐπιστήμη, which nearly corresponds to the attribute which we have called Truth, he says, ‘Knowledge is Movement-in-itself (αὐτοκίνησις), as being a vision of Reality and activity, but not its possession; it may be subsumed under Movement, or Stability, or both.’ It is contrary to Plotinus’ own doctrine to say that in the spiritual world there can be ὄψις without ἔξις.

We have seen already that the disciples of Plotinus were dissatisfied with his spiritual categories. It was satisfactory to me to find that the view which had already occurred to me has the powerful support of Proclus, the ablest thinker of the school next to Plotinus himself. ‘There are three attributes (he says) which make up the essence of Divine things, and are constitutive of all the higher categories—Goodness, Wisdom, Beauty (ἀγαθότης, σοφία κάλλος); and there are three auxiliary principles, second in importance to these, but extending through all the divine orders—Faith, Truth, and Love’ (πίστις ἀλήθεια ἔρωσ. In another places he explains the relationship between these two triads. Goodness, Wisdom, and Beauty are not only the constitutive attributes of the Divine nature as such; they are also active causes. When they are exerting their activity, they take respectively the forms of Faith, Truth, and Love. ‘Faith gives all things a solid foundation in the Good. Truth reveals knowledge in all real existences. Love leads all things to the nature of the Beautiful.’

The ultimate attributes of Reality are values. And it is an unmixed advantage, in considering them, to get rid of the quantitative categories which are only valid of temporal and spatial relations. The intellectual puzzles about sameness and otherness, movement and stability, do not help us at all to understand the spiritual world. They only convince us of the inadequacy of the discursive reason to comprehend the things of the Spirit. The attributes of Reality are values. But values are nothing unless they are values of Reality. Truth, for example, is, subjectively, a complete understanding of the laws and conditions of actual existence. It is the true interpretation of the world of

sense, as knowable by Soul when illuminated by Spirit. Objectively, it is an ordered harmony or system of cosmic life, interpreted in terms of vital law, and nowhere contradicted by experience. If, as is notoriously the case, perfect law and order are not to be found in the world of ordinary experience; if perfect Beauty and Goodness are not to be discerned by the Soul except when it turns to Spirit, we have to suppose that these imperfections are partly due to our faulty apprehension, and partly to the essential conditions of a process which is doubly split up by Space and Time, and which is so disintegrated precisely in order that spiritual values may be realised through conflict with evil.

The great difficulty in this scheme is one which is by no means created by the scheme itself. It is rather a fundamental problem of all philosophy; and a system which brings it out clearly is so far superior to a system which ignores or conceals it. The difficulty is that judgments of value give us an essentially graduated world; while judgments of existence are not so easily graduated. In judgments of value every object is what it is only in a relation of better or worse as compared with other objects, or of estimated defect in relation to an absolute standard. But judgments of existence are not naturally arranged in an ascending or descending series. An object either is or is not. The quantitative measurements with which science is occupied establish no generic difference between the smaller and the greater. The scientific intellect would be satisfied with a single realm of objective reality, all on the same plane, as distinguished from a shadow-world of false opinions (*ψυδαίς δόξαι*), to be suppressed wherever recognised. Science has no business with the categories 'good' and 'bad,' 'beautiful' and 'ugly,' and has no absolute standard whereby to approve or condemn any phenomenon. It is true that, as its enemies are now beginning to point out, it has frequently set up an absolute standard, that of universal continuity or invariable sequence, often erroneously called causation, and has treated as a scandal or an enigma the deviations from complete regularity which the investigation of nature brings to light. This, however, is only one of many instances in which judgments of value intrude unnoticed into an abstract method of inquiry when it attempts to deal with the concrete actual. The unconscious assumption is that the order of nature must be perfect, and that the perfect is the absolutely regular. This

assumption obliges the scientist to distinguish between normal and abnormal phenomena, and to recognise degrees of abnormality. But these are value-judgments: the abnormal phenomenon is, so to speak, convicted as a law-breaker, although its existence is in truth not a breach of the law but a confutation of it. However, a severer dependence upon observed facts, and a distrust of generalisation, are now characteristic of scientific research. Speaking generally, the scientist aims at a valuation which shall nowhere be contradicted by experience; while the metaphysician endeavours so to interpret experience that it shall nowhere contradict his valuation. But this latter can only be achieved if the contents of experience are arranged on a graduated scale, according to their relative approximation to an absolute standard not realised in finite experience. Morality and Art can face the possibility that their ideals are not fully realised anywhere or at any time, though in admitting this possibility they confess their faith in a supra-spatial and supra-temporal kingdom of spiritual existence. The Platonist believes that he has the witness of the Spirit to the eternal reality as well as to the validity of his ideals, and he resolutely rejects the expedient of throwing them into the future, as if there were a natural tendency in the universe to improve itself. His ontology therefore compels him to identify Reality with achieved perfection; and this involves the difficulty of postulating degrees of existence corresponding with degrees of value. No one will pretend that he has succeeded in clearing this conception of its inherent difficulties. It is tempting to say, with Bradley, that graduation belongs only to Appearance; but are we not then in danger of breaking the link which connects the world of phenomena with the world of Spirit? There is, in point of fact, no graduation given to us in the physical world; graduation is entirely the work of our value-judgments interpreting phenomena. But these value-judgments claim to be also judgments of existence; for that which has no existence has no value. If then graduation is only Appearance, we are left, it seems to me, with a perfect world of the Ideas over against an undifferentiated world of Matter. The former, it would seem, has no existence, and the latter no value; nor is it possible to bring them together.

The solution offered by a spiritual philosophy, such as that of Plotinus, is that the world is most adequately conceived under the form of spiritual values,

rather than under the form of commensurable quantities. It is only when we think of ponderable quantities that the dilemma 'to be or not to be' leaves no escape. Science is in truth occupied with certain values—those which Plotinus calls order and limit (κόσμος or τάξις and πέρας), and looks for them in the objects which it examines. From this point of view, all real irregularity is a problem, and the only solution of the problem is to show that the irregularity is only apparent. Similarly the apparent 'failures of purpose,' as Aristotle calls them, in soul-life, are problems for the philosopher. But the notion of 'imperfect existence,' taken in itself, does not seem to me to involve any contradiction when applied to immaterial things.

It is also a principle of the philosophy of Spirit that since all the world of becoming is radically teleological, it can only be understood by the method of valuation. As Lotze says in a very fine passage: 'All the increase of knowledge which we may hope to attain, we must look for, not from the contemplation of our intelligent nature in general, but from a concentration of consciousness upon our destiny. Insight into what ought to be will alone open our eyes to discern what is; for there can be no body of facts, no course of destiny, apart from the end and meaning of the whole, from which each part has received not only existence but also the active nature in which it glories.'

The three attributes of the Divine nature, Goodness, Truth (or Wisdom), and Beauty, are ultimates, in our experience. They cannot be fused, or wholly harmonised. There is a noëtic parallelism between them, with that character of mutual inclusion which belongs to spiritual existences. Popular theology quite justifiably fuses them, with the help of a quasi-sensuous imagery, into a kind of unity, in which all three suffer equal violence. The aim of popular religion is practical; it gives us a working hypothesis and a rule of conduct; but its science, ethics, and æsthetics are all demonstrably faulty. The philosophy of Plotinus does not permit us to acquiesce in such accommodations. It shows us why we must expect to find some difficulties insuperable, by insisting that there is a stage, which we have not yet reached, where they will disappear. 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.' Meanwhile we have our revelation, imperfect though it is, of these three attributes of God, a threefold cord not quickly broken.

It follows from this conception of the spiritual world as a kingdom of values, that it is the goal of the will and of the intellect together. We need not try to separate these two faculties, which work together. The 'ought to be' is an element of spiritual perception; but the ethical ideal which is here realised is of no private interpretation. It is not my will, but the will of God, which is done Yonder.

In concluding this section, we may mention that Eucken and Münsterberg both regard a self-contained system of pure values as one of the desiderata of modern philosophy. Would it not be true to say that if Life is the supreme category of the world as constituted by and known to Spirit, harmony must have the form of teleology, unity of love, joy of creation, and goodness of virtue?

See especially p. . 'The philosophy of the spirit tells us that the spirit desires three things and desires these for their own sake and not for any further aim beyond them. It desires to do what is right for the sake of doing what is right; to know the truth for the sake of knowing the truth; and it has a third desire which is not so easily stated, but which I will now call the desire for beauty without giving any further explanation of it. These three desires and these alone are the desires of the spirit; and they differ from all our other desires in that they are to be pursued for their own sake, and can indeed only be pursued for their own sake.'

The Great Spirit and Individual Spirits

We have followed the explanations of Plotinus with regard to the Universal Soul and its relations to individual Souls. We shall not be surprised to find Universal Spirit holding much the same position in relation to particular Spirits. The chief passage in which he deals with 'the Great Spirit' is in the second chapter of the Sixth Ennead. Let us suppose, he says, that Spirit is not yet attached to any particular being. We may find an analogy in generalised Science, which is potentially all the sciences, but actually none of them. So Universal Spirit, enthroned above particular Spirits, contains them all potentially, and gives them all that they possess. The Great Spirit exists in itself, and the particular Spirits exist equally in themselves; they are implied in

the Universal Spirit, and it in them. Each particular Spirit exists both in itself and in the Great Spirit, and the Great Spirit exists in each of them as well as in itself. The Great Spirit is the totality of Spirits in actuality (ἐνργία), and each of them potentially (δυνάμι). They are particular Spirits ἐνργία, and the Great Spirit δυνάμι. As to the source of particular Spirits, he says that when the Great Spirit energises within itself, the result of its activity is the other Spirits, but when outside itself, Soul. Thus the Great Spirit is exactly analogous to the Universal Soul on the next rung of the ladder.

The Great Spirit, as the manifestation of the ineffable Godhead in all its attributes, is the God of Neoplatonism. This fact is obscured both by the completeness with which it is divested of all anthropomorphic attributes, and by the mystical craving for union with the Godhead itself, which has been commonly supposed to be the starting-point and the goal of this philosophy. But it is only as Spirit that the Godhead is known to us as a factor in our lives. We have the power of rising above our psychic selves to share in the life of Spirit; and this communion, which may be the directing principle of our inner and outer life, is, except in rare moments of ecstasy, the highest degree of worship and spiritual joy to which a human being can attain. The life of religion consists in communion with the Father of Spirits; and it is here that philosophy also reaches her goal. Those Christian philosophers who, following the deepest doctrine of the Fourth Gospel, have placed salvation in communion with the Logos-Christ, are in a position to understand the Plotinian doctrine of Spirit. Such similes as that of the vine and its branches, and such sayings as 'Abide in me, and I in you,' illustrate the relation of the Great Spirit to other Spirits in Neoplatonism.

In ascending to Spirit, the Soul loses itself in order to find itself again. We present ourselves a living sacrifice, not to death but to life; and this is possible because our highest life-principle is supra-personal. The ideal unity is truer than the concrete individuality. Love joins the discontinuity of living beings to the continuity of life, and mirrors in the subjective sphere the objective unity of individuals. Love is the psychical expression of the natural unity of living creatures, and of their union with God. This doctrine is common to Neoplatonism and Christianity.

The consciousness of eternal values, and love for them, are primary and instinctive affections of the Soul. And since these values are not coincident with individual advantage, this fact is inexplicable unless the ultimate reality is supra-personal. We do not, in our consciousness, begin with the individual and then pass by abstraction to the general, but the general works in us as such immediately. We see resemblances before we see the objects which resemble each other. The objective interconnexion of life is a fact, and the highest expression of each individual life is not itself but the totality of life. The physiology of birth and infancy indicate how little independent the individual is. We are drawn into suprapersonal life whenever we find it impossible to rest in the present moment, which alone belongs to us; whenever we rise above the mere animal plane, we in truth forget ourselves and enter into a larger life. The fact that our psycho-physical ego is for all of us object not subject (this is indisputably true) is itself a sufficient proof that we, in our deepest ground, are far more than it.

And yet the individual is not a link in the chain. He is the chain itself. The whole is not 'the race,' as known to the historian or anthropologist. The race, so studied, is an organism more loosely integrated, and therefore of a lower type, than the personal life. But in the spiritual world the race is one; 'each is all,' as Plotinus says in the passage quoted below.

The differences which keep spiritual things from fusing completely are qualitative differentiations; but, as Plotinus says in an interesting passage, they are ἐνέργεια and λόγοι rather than qualities. These distinctions, which do not involve separation, are a good thing, because they add to the richness of the real world, which includes not only the diverse (διάφορα), but opposites (ἐναντία). It is not easy to answer the question whether there are differences of value among the νοητά. Their common life is so much more than their individual life that the question has not much meaning. The inferior values, if such there be, are raised to the level of perfection by their intimate unity with the whole spiritual world. On the lower levels real inferiority exists, because the avenues of intercourse with things Yonder are obstructed.

It is plain that the individual νοῦς is the same life as the individual ψυχή, only transformed into the Divine image and liberated from all baser elements.

Individuality is maintained by the ‘something unique’ in each Spirit; but it is no longer any bar to complete communion with all that is good, true, and beautiful in others. And this state, so far from being a mere ideal, is the one true reality, eternal and objectively true existence, the home of the Soul, which has its citizenship in heaven.

Mr. Bosanquet says, ‘In every true part—hence in every member—of an infinite whole there is something corresponding to every feature of such a whole, though not repeating it...It would certainly be true of a genuine infinite that if we speak of whole and parts at all, the whole represents itself within every part.’ This is exactly the doctrine of Plotinus with regard to νοητά. Their characteristic in relation to each other is ‘mutual inclusion,’ which is another way of saying that ‘the relations between psychical states cannot be expressed quantitatively.’ ‘Each part of the whole is infinite.’ ‘Each νοητόν is intrinsically multifold.’ ‘Each is a whole, and all everywhere, without confusion and without separation.’ In a fine passage, one of the noblest in Plotinus, the condition of beatified spirits is thus described. ‘A pleasant life is theirs in heaven; they have the Truth for mother, nurse, real being, and nutriment; they see all things, not the things that are born and die, but those which have real being; and they see themselves in others. For them all things are transparent, and there is nothing dark or impenetrable, but everyone is manifest to everyone internally, and all things are manifest; for light is manifest to light. For everyone has all things in himself and sees all things in another; so that all things are everywhere and all is all and each is all, and the glory is infinite. Each of them is great, since the small also is great. In heaven the sun is all the stars, and again each and all are the sun. One thing in each is prominent above the rest; but it also shows forth all. There a pure movement reigns; for that which produces the movement, not being a stranger to it, does not trouble it. Rest is also perfect there, because no principle of agitation mingles with it.’

William Penn, the Quaker, shows how Love can anticipate the state of beatified Spirits here on earth. ‘They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies. Nor can Spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle, the root and record of

their friendship. Death is but crossing the world, as friends do the seas; they live in one another still. For they must needs be present, that love and live in that which is omnipresent. In this Divine glass they see face to face; and their converse is free as well as pure. This is the comfort of friends, that though they may be said to die, yet their friendship and society are in the best sense ever present, because immortal.'

Life in the Spiritual World

The most attractive description of the state of beatified Spirits is that quoted above, from the eighth book of the Fifth Ennead. Another brief passage may be added. 'After having admired the world of sense, its grandeur, and beauty, the eternal regularity of its movement, the gods, visible or invisible, the dæmons, the animals and plants which it contains, we may rise to the archetype of this world, a world more real than ours is; we may there contemplate all the spiritual objects which are of their own nature eternal, and which exist in their own knowledge and life, and the pure Spirit which presides over them, and infinite wisdom, and the true kingdom of Kronos, the God who is κόροϛ and νοῦϛ. For it embraces in itself all that is immortal, all Spirit, all that is God, all Soul, eternally unchanging. For why should it seek to change, seeing that all is well with it? And whither should it move, when it has all things in itself? Being perfect, it can seek for no increase.' It is much the same as Plato's description in the Phaedo: 'When the Soul returns into itself and reflects, it passes into another region, the region of that which is pure and everlasting, immortal and unchangeable; and feeling itself kindred thereto, it dwells there under its own control, and has rest from its wanderings, and is constant and one with itself as are the objects with which it deals.' Aristotle is really not far from the same conception of spiritual life. 'We ought not to pay regard to those who exhort us that as we are men we ought to think human things and to keep our eyes upon mortality. Rather, as far as we can, we should endeavour to rise to that in us which is immortal, and to do everything in conformity with what is best for us; for if in bulk it is small, yet in power and dignity it far exceeds all else that we possess. Nay, we may even think of it as our true self, for it is the supreme element and the best that is in us. If so, it would be absurd for us to choose any life but that which is properly our own.'

In the spiritual world finite beings exist as pulse-beats of the whole system; finite relations are superseded by complete communion. All the faculties of the Soul must be transmuted to suit these eternal conditions. There can be no reasoning (λογικμός) Yonder; a constant activity (ἐνέργια ἐστῶσα) takes the place of dubitative reasoning. Nor can there be any memory; for all νόησιϛ is timeless. In the spiritual world all is reason (λόγοϛ) and wisdom; Spirits pass

their existence in 'living contemplation' (θεωρία ξῶσα). 'The calm of the Spirit is not an ecstatic condition, but a state of activity.' Its rest is unimpeded energy.

This raises a question, which affects the roots of the Neoplatonic philosophy, whether even in heaven there can be satisfaction without tension. For if there be no such thing as unimpeded activity, the only escape from this troublesome world of change and chance would be into the formless Absolute and the dreamless sleep of Nirvana. We should lose the κόσμοςνοήσις, and with it almost all that makes Plotinus an inspiring guide. The world would be cut into two halves, both of which could be proved by analysis to be unreal. The answer, I think, is that in the spiritual world the opposition between tension and free action, like that between rest and motion, is transcended. Of course the Spirit cannot energise in vacuo; but the condition which calls out the expenditure of its energy is willed and accepted, so that if there is tension, there is no strife. We must not forget that there is a close parallelism between the world Yonder and that which we know Here below. 'All that is there is here,' as Plotinus says. The difference is that what we see here in a state of partial disintegration, amid a war of jarring elements, is there known as vigorous and harmonious life. The forces which 'here' seem to thwart the operations of the Universal Soul are not destroyed 'there,' but minister to the triumphant and healthful activity of Spirit.

Plotinus raises the curious question, what room, if any, there is for the arts and sciences in heaven. His answer is, that in so far as these aim at symmetry and harmony, they are rooted in spiritual reality, and have their place in the higher sphere. Greek æsthetics always overvalued the importance of symmetry and proportion in art. A modern Platonist would be right in enlarging this answer, and saying that all art which expresses an eternal or spiritual meaning has its place in the eternal world of Beauty, while all science which succeeds in the discovery of nature's laws belongs to the eternal world of Truth.

In heaven 'the Soul is the Matter of Spirit,' which means that the self-transcendence of the Soul is achieved by making itself the passive instrument of Spirit, turning its gaze steadily towards God and heaven, and trying, as a

medieval mystic says, 'to be to God what a man's hand is to a man.' When it thus turns to God, it finds that 'there is nothing between.' It comes to Spirit, is moulded by Spirit, and united to Spirit. Nor does it lose its individuality, or its self-consciousness, though it is one and the same with the world of Spirit; and from this blessed state it will not change.

'In knowing God, the Spirit knows also itself; for it will know what it receives from God, what God has given to it, and can give. In knowing this, it will know itself; for it is itself one of God's gifts, or rather the sum-total of them. If then the Spirit will know him and his powers, it will know itself as having come from him and derived from him all that it can do. If it cannot see him clearly, it is because seer and seen are the same. For this reason Spirit will know and see itself, because to see is to become oneself the thing seen.'

Thus the Soul can pass without any abrupt change into the eternal world, and find itself at home there. 'There is nothing between,' as Plotinus says again and again. It is only a question of words whether we call 'the pure Spirit in the Soul' 'our Spirit,' or whether we still call it Soul. 'We are kings when we are in the Spirit.' Nay, we are no longer mere men, when we ascend to that height, 'taking with us the best part of the Soul.' The understanding (*διενοία*) can discern the handwriting, as it were, of Spirit. It judges things by its own canons, which are given to it by Spirit, and testify that there is a higher region than its own. It knows that it is an image of Spirit, and that the handwriting which it deciphers in itself is the work of a writer who is Yonder. Will it then be content not to go higher? No. It will proceed to the region where alone complete self-consciousness and self-knowledge exist—the realm of Spirit. So 'the *διάνοια* of the true Soul is Spirit in Soul.'

It is difficult to picture to ourselves a state of existence in which we shall no longer reason, because we know intuitively; in which we shall not talk, because we shall know each other's thoughts; a state in which we shall be 'all eye.' St. Augustine uses the same language and applies it to the angels and beatified Spirits. Origen has much the same doctrine about the relation of Soul to Spirit that we find in Plotinus; but, like almost all Christian philosophers, he follows St. Paul in calling the higher *πνεῦμα*, not *νοῦς*. 'When the Soul is lifted up and follows the Spirit, and is separated from the body, and

not only follows the Spirit but becomes in the Spirit, must we not say that it puts off its soul-nature, and becomes spiritual? ' But Plotinus will not let us forget that Soul is the child of Spirit; and that the higher principle never is, or can be, barren. The felicity of Spirit always flows over into Soul, which is the Logos and activity of Spirit. As Shakespeare says:—

*'Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for themselves: for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues: nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.'*

It is necessary for us to be carefully on our guard against interpreting the Neoplatonic 'Yonder' as merely the future life. It is intimately bound up with present experience. Every worthy object of human activity, including the mechanical arts, belongs at least in part to the eternal world. Spirit is the universal element in all worthy occupations. Spirituality means a persistent attitude of mind, which will never be immersed in the particular instance. The Soul is able to recognise spiritual law in the natural world, and in recognising it, Soul itself becomes more spiritual. Escape from the thralldom of change and chance is always open; and the return journey, which is the magnetic attraction of Spirit, is always open too.

Eternity (αἰών)

'Spirit possesses all things at all times simultaneously. It possesses all things unchanged in identity. It is; it knows no past or future; all things in the spiritual world co-exist in an eternal Now. Each of them is Spirit and Being; taken together, they are universal Spirit, universal Being.'

'In virtue of what attributes do we call the spiritual world immortal and perpetual? In what does perpetuity (ἀϊδιότης) consist? Are perpetuity and eternity identical, or is a thing eternal by being perpetual? In any case eternity must depend on one common character, but it is an idea composed of many elements, or a nature either derived from the things Yonder or united to them, or seen in them, so that all spiritual objects taken together make one eternity, which nevertheless is complex in its powers and in its essence. When we look at its complex powers, we may call it Being or Reality, as the substratum of spiritual objects; we may call it Movement, as their life; Rest, as their permanence; as the plurality of these principles, we may call it Difference; as their unity, Identity. A synthesis of these principles brings them back to life alone, suppressing their differences, and considering their inexhaustible activity, the identity and immutability of their action, their life, and their thought, in which there is no change or break. In contemplating all things thus, we contemplate eternity; we see a life which is permanent in its identity, which possesses all things at all times present to it, which is not first one thing and then another, but all things at once; which is perfect and indivisible. It contains all things together, as in a single point, without anything passing from it; it remains identical and suffers no change. Being always in the present, because it has never lost anything nor will acquire anything, it is always what it is. Eternity is not the substratum; it is the light which proceeds from it. Its identity admits of no futurity; it is always now, always the same.... That of which we cannot say, 'It was,' or 'it will be,' but only, 'it is'; that, the existence of which is immovable, because the past has taken nothing from it and the future can bring nothing to it, that is eternity. Therefore the life of the real in reality, in its full, unbroken, and absolutely unchanging totality, is the eternity which we are seeking.

'Eternity is not an extraneous accident of spiritual reality; it is with it and of it. It is closely bound up with reality, because we see that all the other things which we affirm to exist Yonder are from and with reality. For the things which hold the first rank in being must be in and with the highest existences. This is to be said of the Beautiful, and also of Truth. Some of these qualities are as it were in a part of the whole of Being, while others are in the whole; because this whole, being a true whole, is not composed of parts, but

engenders the parts. Further, in this whole, Truth does not consist in the agreement of one thing with another, but with that of which it is the Truth. The true whole must be a whole not only in the sense that it is all things, but in the sense that nothing is wanting to it. If so, it can have no future; for to say that anything will be for it is to imply that something is wanting, that it is not yet the whole. Again, nothing contrary to its nature can happen to it; for it is impassible. And if nothing can happen to it, it has no future and no past.

‘In the case of created things, if you take away their future you take away their existence, which consists in continual growth; but in things that are not created you cannot apply the idea of futurity without ousting them from their position in Reality. For they could not belong originally to the world of real being, if their life were in a becoming and in the future.... The blessed beings which are in the highest rank have not even any desire for the future; for they are already all that it is their nature to be; they possess all that they ought to possess; they have nothing to seek for, since there is no future for them, nor can they receive anything for which there is a future.... The world of Spirit can admit nothing which belongs to not-being. This condition and nature of Reality is what we mean by eternity; the word αἰών is derived from τὸ αἰ ὄν;v, that which exists for ever....

‘What then if we do not cease to contemplate the eternal world, if we remain united to it, adoring its nature; if we do not weary in so doing, if we run to it and take our stand in eternity, not swerving to right or left, that we may be eternal like it, contemplating eternity and the eternal by that which is eternal in ourselves? If that which exists in this manner is eternal and ever-existing, it follows that that which never sinks to a lower nature, and which possesses the fullness of life... must be perpetual.... Eternity then is a sublime thing; it is identical with God. Eternity is God manifesting his own nature; it is Being in its calmness, its self-identity, its permanent life. We must not be surprised to find plurality in God; for everything Yonder is multiple on account of its infinite power. That is infinite which lacks nothing; and that of which we speak is essentially infinite, because it loses nothing. Eternity then may be defined as life which is infinite because it is universal and loses nothing of itself, having no past and no future....

‘Since this nature, so all-beautiful and eternal, exists around the One, from the One, and to the One, never leaving it, but abiding around it and in it and living like it, Plato speaks with profound wisdom when he says that “eternity abides in One.” In these words he implies that Eternity not only reduces itself to unity with itself, but that it is the life of Reality around the One. This is what we seek, and that which so abides is eternity. That which abides in this manner, and which remains the same, that is to say, the activity of this life which remains of itself turned towards the One and united to it, and which has no illusory life or existence, must be eternity. For true being consists in never not being and never being different; that is to say, in being always the same without distinctions. True being knows no gaps, no developments, no progress, no extension, no before or after. If it has no before or after; if the truest thing that we can say about it is that it is; if it is in such a way as to be Reality and life, we are again brought to the notion of eternity. We must add, however, that when we say that “Being is for ever,” that there is not one time when it is and another when it is not, we are speaking with a view to clearness; “for ever” is not used quite correctly. If we use it to express that Reality is indestructible, we may mislead ourselves by using words applicable only to the many, and to persistence in time. It might be better to call eternity “that which is,” simply. But as “that which is” is an adequate equivalent of “Reality,” and as some writers have called Becoming “Reality,” the addition of “for ever” seemed necessary.’

It is plain from this passage, and from all that Plotinus says about the eternal world, that his conception of eternity is widely different from the hope of continued existence in time, to which many persons, though by no means so many as is often assumed, cling with passionate desire. Ghost-stories have no attraction for the Platonist. He does not believe them, and would be very sorry to have to believe them. The kind of immortality which ‘psychical research’ endeavours to establish would be for him a negation of the only immortality which he desires and believes in. The difference between the two hopes is fundamental. Some men are so much in love with what Plotinus would call the lower soul-life, the surface-consciousness and surface-experience which make up the content of our sojourn here as known to ourselves, that they wish, if possible, to continue it after their bodies are

mouldering in the grave. Others recognise that this lower soul-life is a banishment from the true home of the Soul, which is in a supra-temporal world, and they have no wish to prolong the conditions of their probation after the probation itself is ended, and we are quit of our 'body of humiliation.' Nor does Neoplatonism encourage the belief that the blessed life is a state which will only begin for the individual when the earthly course of the whole human race has reached its term. This theory of the 'intermediate state' as a dreamless sleep finds a beautiful expression in Christina Rossetti:—

*'O Earth, be heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her.
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.'*

'The morning of Eternity,' it appears, is the beginning of a new series, snipped off at one end but not at the other. And the waiting time before that hour arrives must be a period of unconsciousness, in which the Soul is neither dead nor alive. This unphilosophical conception is very unlike the doctrine of Plotinus. For him, to win admittance into the eternal world, which lives in an everlasting Now, is to awake out of sleep. But the sleep is the surface life of common consciousness. And, as he says, we can take nothing with us which belongs to the dream-world of mortality. The Soul which lives Yonder in blessed intercourse with God is not the 'compound' (σύνθετον) which began its existence when we were born. Nothing which can never die was ever born. Our true self is a denizen of the eternal world. Its home is in the sphere of

eternal and unchanging activity Yonder, even while it energises in the execution of finite but Divine purposes here below.

Eternity is an experience and a conception partly latent and partly patent in all human life. It is in part defined to our consciousness negatively. Of things in place and time we say: This thing is outside that. They cannot coincide or amalgamate; hence they are different. And again we say, This thing comes after that. The former must disappear before the latter can arrive; hence they are different. But our minds tell us that there is a large class of things of which these statements are untrue. These things do not interfere with each other or displace each other. They are alive and active, but they are neither born nor die. They are constant without inertia; they are active but they do not move. Our knowledge of the eternal order is as direct as our knowledge of the temporal order; but our customary habits of thought and modes of speech confuse us. To be honest, we can think most clearly of eternal life when we divest the conception of its ethical associations; but this is to cut the nerve which links the temporal and the eternal. It will lead us to acosmism, for this world will then have no meaning; or, since 'outraged nature has her occasional revenges,' we may swing round into materialism. And the interpenetration of time and eternity in our consciousness, though it may spoil or confound the symmetry of our metaphysics, is, after all, a fact of the soul-nature, in which we live and move. Reason seeks to divide them, assigning to Cæsar and to God what belongs to each; but in the true spiritual experience they are not divided. Time is a child of eternity, and 'resembles its parent as much as it can.' The most illuminating of all prophetic writings are those in which the temporal is set in a framework of eternity, such as the Johannine presentation of the life of Christ, or Wordsworth's interpretations of wild nature. And the sense of contrast between the temporal and the eternal existence, which are both ours, has produced some of the noblest utterances of religious meditation. Such is the thought which inspired the th Psalm, or the following words of Augustine, 'Thou, O God, precedest all past times by the height of thine ever-present eternity; and thou exceedest all future times, since they are future, and when they have come and gone will be past time.... Thy years neither come nor go; but these years of ours both come and go, that so they may all come. All thy years abide together, because

they abide...but these our years will all be only when they will all have ceased to be. Thy years are but one day; and this thy day is not every day but to-day. This thy to-day is eternity.' The very transiency of time becomes a stately procession of images across a background of eternal truth. 'This day of ours does not pass within thee, and yet it does pass within thee, since all these things have no means of passing, unless somehow thou dost contain them all.'

The natures of Time and Eternity are so diverse that it is very difficult to bring them into vital relation with each other. We might have expected that Plotinus would have resorted to his favourite expedient of introducing an intermediate category which should 'partake of the nature of both.' I do not find that he has done so. But the Christian schoolmen of the Middle Ages, who on this subject are in direct descent from the Neoplatonists through the highly respected Boëthius, did make this attempt. The analysis of the concept *aevum*, which stands between Eternity and Time, is of great interest to the student of Neoplatonism. The following summary is taken mainly from the work of the very able and learned Jesuit, Bernard Boedder.

In the strict sense, he says, Eternity implies an existence which is essentially without beginning and without end. But no creature can be essentially without beginning and end and internal succession. If such a creature exists, it owes its eternity to the will of God. But God is essentially eternal. As the First Cause, He can have had no beginning. Absolute necessity of existence must be identical with His essence; He can therefore never cease to be. And His existence is unchangeable; therefore it cannot contain any different successive phases or modes of being. Boëthius defines Eternity as 'a simultaneously full and perfect possession of interminable life.' Eternity, thus defined, is identical with the highest life conceivable, the self-activity of infinite intellectual will. This life is 'interminable,' because it endures of absolute necessity. It is 'simultaneously possessed' because it is neither capable of development nor liable to defect. In God is neither past nor present nor future. As Boëthius expresses it, 'the passing Now makes time, the standing Now makes eternity.' The duration of God is one everlasting state, the duration of temporal being is liable to a succession of states really distinct from each other.

The duration of created Spirits is called aevum. In aevum there is no succession, as regards the substantial perfection of a created Spirit. Nevertheless, Spirits are not quite above time or succession; for though the specific perfection of their substantial being is unalterable, they can pass from one thought and volition to another, and the Creator may cause in them now one and now another accidental perfection. Their essential being is above time, but they are liable to accidental modification of temporal duration. The duration called time belongs properly to Matter. St. Thomas Aquinas says: 'Time has an earlier and a later; aevum has no earlier and later in itself, but both can be connected with it; eternity has neither an earlier nor a later, nor can they be connected with it.' 'Spiritual creatures,' says Aquinas again, 'as regards their affections and intellections, are measured by time; as regards their natural being, they are measured by aevum; as regards their vision of glory, they participate in eternity.'

Baron von Hügel has yielded to the temptation to find in the notion of aevum an anticipation of Bergson's *durée*. But as Bergson is far from holding the doctrines about Time and Eternity which are common to Neoplatonism and to the Catholic Schoolmen, it is not likely that he should need or acknowledge a conception which was expressly designed to mediate between them. The scholastic aevum is something which 'participates' (in the Platonic sense) in Time and Eternity, as these words are understood by St. Thomas. It is, in fact, the form which belongs to Soul-life, as Time belongs to the changes of Matter, and Eternity to the life of Spirit. A modern Neoplatonist may find the conception useful in explaining the relations of the Soul to Time and Eternity, though it is of little or no value in bridging the chasm between temporal succession and the *totum simul*. 'We prefer to confess,' says another modern interpreter of the Schoolmen, 'that we do not know how to effect the translation of Eternity into Time.' Eternity is above and beyond us, though in it we live and move and have our being. If we understood it, we should understand Time also, and the relation between them. But this cannot be, without transcending the conditions of our finite existence.

Eternity is, on one side, an ethical postulate. Without it, the whole life of will and purpose would be stultified. All purpose looks towards some end to be

realised. But if time in its course hurls all its own products into nothingness— if there is no eternal background against which all happenings in time are defined, and by which they are judged, the notion of purpose is destroyed. The existence of human will and reason becomes incomprehensible. Our minds travel quite freely over time and space; they are not confined to the present; whether we realise it or not, in every thought we imply that Reality is supratemporal. Both Time and Eternity are involved in every act of our moral and rational life. And it is through our experience of Time that we come to know Eternity. As Baron von Hügel says, ‘Time is the very stuff and means in and by which we vitally experience and apprehend eternal life....A real succession, real efforts, and the continuous sense of limitation and inadequacy are the very means in and through which man apprehends increasingly (if only he thus loves and wills) the contrasting yet sustaining simultaneity, spontaneity, infinity, and pure action of the eternal life of God.’ Duration is not eternal life, though in its entirety and meaning it is very near to it. It may be called the eternity of the phenomenal world. This thought has been very nobly expressed in a fine sonnet by Sidney Lanier:—

*‘ Now at thy soft recalling voice I rise
Where thought is lord o'er Time's complete estate,
Like as a dove from out the grey sedge flies
To tree-tops green where coos his heavenly mate.
From these clear coverts high and cool I see
How every time with every time is knit,
And each to all is mortised cunningly,
And none is sole or whole, yet all are fit.
Thus, if this age but as a comma show
Twixt weightier clauses of large-worded years,
My calmer soul scorns not the mark: I know
This crooked point Time's complex sentence clears.
Yet more I learn while, friend, I sit by thee:
Who sees all time, sees all eternity.’*

Eternity is that of which duration is the symbol and sacrament. It is more than the totality of that which strives to express and ‘ imitate’ it. But Time ‘ resembles it as far as it can.’ All that we find in Time exists, ‘ in an eminent

sense,' in eternity. We must therefore beware, when we tread the mystic's negative road, lest we cut ourselves off from knowledge of God. When we say that God, or eternity, is 'not like this,' we mean that Reality is glimmering through its appearances as something higher than they, but not as something wholly alien to them. Therefore we need not discard those modes of envisaging eternity which clearly depend on temporal and spatial imagery. Such imagery cannot be dispensed with; for the symbols of substance and shadow equally belong to this world, and do not take us much further than those of co-existence and succession.

Nevertheless it cannot be denied that popular religion, by insisting on its local and temporal imagery, has not only impeded the progress of natural science, but has sadly impoverished the idea of eternal life, and in the minds of very many has substituted a material fairyland for the true home of the Spirit. The Jewish tendency to throw the golden age into the future has its dangers, no less than the early Greek tendency to throw it into the past.

The Absolute

(τὸ ἓν τὸ πρῶτον, τὸ ἀγαθόν)

THE goal of the Intellect is the One. The goal of the Will is the Good. The goal of the Affections—of Love and Admiration—is the Beautiful.

These three words will all require close analysis. We shall find that the One is something other than a numeral; that the Good is not merely that which satisfies the moral sense; and that the Beautiful is not merely that which causes æsthetic pleasure.

We have seen that Goodness, Truth, and Beauty are the attributes of Spirit and the Spiritual world. They are the three objects of the Soul's quest. They may be represented as the three converging pathways which lead up the hill of the Lord; and they furnish three lines of proof. The spiritual world must be—this is the conclusion of the dialectic, which convinces us that the idea of plurality implies that of unity, that of imperfection a perfect. It ought to be—this is the claim of the ethical sense. It is this is the discovery of direct experience or intuition, made by the Soul yearning in love for its heavenly home.

The Path of Dialectic

The word 'dialectic,' like many other technical terms of Platonism, has helped to confuse modern critics. It means literally the art of discussion, but it has travelled far from its original meaning. Diogenes Laertius quotes Aristotle as saying that the method was invented by Zeno, the Eleatic, from whom it was no doubt borrowed by Socrates. In the Dialogues of Plato it means the art of giving a rational account (λόγον) of things, and more especially the discovery of the general truths and principles which underlie the discoveries of particular sciences. For instance, the results of mathematical and astronomical science need to be examined by the dialectician. In the Republic Socrates

claims that dialectic alone 'can comprehend by regular process all true existence, and what each thing is in its true nature; for the arts in general are concerned with the desires or opinions of men, or are cultivated with a view to production and construction, or for the preservation of such productions and constructions; and as to the mathematical sciences, which have some apprehension of true being, they only dream about being, but never behold the waking reality so long as they leave their hypotheses unexamined and are unable to give an account of them....Dialectic does away with hypothesis, in order to make her own ground secure; the eye of the soul, which is literally buried in an outlandish slough, is by her gentle aid lifted upwards; and she uses as helpers and handmaids in the work of conversion the sciences which we have been discussing.' We reach true science only when we 'do away with the hypotheses' which belong to some sciences and not to others. Such particular hypotheses are only postulates, and we desire to find the non-hypothetical first principle. Dialectic, thus understood, is the art of discovering the affinities of forms or ideas (ἴδη), and kinds or categories (γέννη), with each other. This is why dialectic is specially concerned with the relations of Being, Change, and Permanence. Plotinus follows Plato closely in his treatment of dialectic. 'It is a science which enables us to reason about each thing, to say what it is and how it differs from others, what it has in common with them, where it is, whether it really exists, to determine how many real beings there are, and where not-being is to be found instead of true being. It treats also of good and evil, of all that is subordinated to the Good and to its contrary, of the nature of that which is eternal and of that which is not. It speaks of all things scientifically and not according to simple opinion....It traverses the whole domain of the spiritual, and then by analysis returns to its starting-point.' Then it rests, in contemplation of the One, and hands over logical disquisitions to another art, subordinate to itself. Dialectic receives its clear principles from Spirit, which furnishes Soul with what it can receive. In possession of these principles, it combines and distinguishes its material, till it comes to pure spiritual knowledge. Dialectic is the most precious part of philosophy; all existing things are 'Matter' for it; 'it approaches them methodically, possessing things and thoughts in combination.' Falsehood and sophisms it recognises only to reject them as

alien to itself. The lower kinds of knowledge it leaves to the special sciences, seizing the general truth about them by a kind of intuition. Philosophy includes these studies, such as the detailed application of ethical principles: dialectic, which is the same as wisdom (σοφία), is concerned with the principles themselves, on which conduct depends. But one cannot reach wisdom without traversing first the lower stages.

Dialectic, then, is the study of first principles which leads up to intuitive wisdom. It passes through logic, and at last rises above it. Plotinus is at no pains to separate the intellectual ascent from the moral and the mystical; in fact he refuses to do so. They begin to join long before our journey's end. This view, so disconcerting both to 'intellectualist' (if there are any such people) and to those who try to find intellectualism in the school of Plato, is the outcome of the conception of logic which is common to Plato and Hegel. 'Logic is the supreme law or nature of experience, the impulse towards unity or coherence by which every fragment yearns towards the whole to which it belongs.' The birth of logic is an experience which clamours for completion.

Dialectic, says Plotinus, rests, and worries itself no more (οὐδέν ἔτι πολυπραγμονί) when it has traversed the whole domain of Spirit. But it does not permit us to stop at the attributes of the spiritual world. Just as Eckhart, the most Plotinian of all Christian philosophers, distinguishes between God and the Godhead, so Plotinus must follow his quest of unity to the utmost limit. The God whom we commonly worship is the revelation, not the revealer. The source and ground of revelation cannot be revealed; the ground of knowledge cannot be known. So the common source and ground of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty must be beyond existence and beyond knowledge.

The Absolute as the One

If the Greeks had had a symbol for zero, and especially if that symbol had been the mystic circle, it may well be that the Pythagoreans and Plotinus would have anticipated John Scotus Erigena, who called the Absolutenihil. Plotinus does call 'the One' the negation of all number. The earlier Pythagoreans had not learnt to distinguish between numbers and the things counted. For this reason they affirmed that numbers are realities. Plato agreed that numbers are realities, but this is part of his affirmation that there are other kinds of reality besides that of sensible objects. The Monad in Pythagorean arithmetic was not itself a number, but the source in which the whole nature of all numbers is implicit. They thought of the Monad as the undifferentiated whole, out of which particulars branched off. The true whole, as Plotinus said, is that which gives birth to the parts, not a mere collection of the parts. Thus we must be careful not to give 'the One' a merely numerical sense. In this, the numerical sense, unity and plurality are correlatives, so that we cannot have the former without the latter. In this sense, the Absolute One would be an impossible abstraction. But for Plotinus the One is the source from which the differentiation of unity and plurality proceeds; it is the transcendence of separability rather than the negation of plurality. In the Fifth Ennead he says that 'the One is not one of the units which make up the number Two.' When we call the Absolute the One, we intend thereby only to exclude the notion of discerptibility.

The unity in duality of Spirit and the Spiritual World points decisively to a deeper unity lying behind them. This is the coping-stone of the dialectic. 'Spirit,' he says, 'cannot hold the first place. There must be a principle above it, such as we have been endeavouring to find. Spirit is at once νοῦς and νοητόν that is to say, two things at once. If they are two, we must find that which is before this duality. What is this? Is it Spirit alone? No; for there can be no νοῦς without a νοητόν; separate τὸ νοητόν, and you will no longer have νοῦς. If the principle we are seeking is not νοῦς, it must, if it is to escape the dualism, be something above νοῦς. Why then should it not be τὸ νοητόν? Because τὸ νοητόν is as closely joined to νοῦς as νοῦς to it. If then it is neither νοῦς nor νοητόν, what can it be? We shall answer, the source from which

both νοῦς and νοητόν proceed.’ The Absolute is therefore inferred from the impossibility of reducing either νοῦς or νοητόν to dependence; the two are inseparable, and the Absolute can be neither of them. Another reason, for Plotinus, why neither νοῦς nor νοητόν can be the Absolute is that they are themselves multiple. ‘The νοήματα are not one but many,’ and νοῦς also is many in one. The name ‘The One’ is not adequate to express the nature of the Absolute, which cannot be apprehended by any of our senses. If any sense could perceive it, it would be sight; but how can we see that which has no form? We say that the Absolute is One as being indivisible; but this is to introduce a quantitative measurement, which is quite out of place. Without attempting to picture to ourselves the nature of the One, we can understand that as all things participate in unity, in different degrees, and as the path to reality is a progress from lower unities to higher unities, there must be, at the top of the ascent, an absolute unity, a perfect simplicity, above all differentiation. It is not the weakest and poorest of all numbers, but the plenitude of all, and the source of all.

The One as Beyond Existence

In considering the train of reasoning which led the Neoplatonists to place the Absolute ‘beyond existence,’ we must remember three things. () The nature of the Godhead is certainly unknown to us; we are unable to form any idea of the absolute and unconditioned. () It is a principle of this philosophy that we are not cut off from the highest form of life—the eternal and universal life of Spirit. () We have, in the mystical state, an experience of intuition which is formless and indescribable, and which is therefore above the spiritual world of Forms or Ideas.

The doctrine goes back to Plato, and a little further still, for Euclides of Megara was the first to identify the Good and the One, who is also called God and Wisdom. He seems to have argued that all the Forms may be reduced to One, which alone exists. This line of thought leads straight to the nihilism of some Indian philosophy, for an all-embracing, undifferentiated, solely existing unity has no distinguishable content whatever. Plato, in the Republic, seeks to

escape this conclusion by relegating the Good, or the One, 'beyond Reality' (τῆς οὐσιᾶς). The passage, which is isolated in Plato, and is never referred to by Aristotle, had yet an enormous importance for subsequent philosophy, 'The God is not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their Being and Reality, though the Good is not Reality, but beyond it, and superior to it in dignity and power.' This remarkable sentence is followed by the famous allegory of the cave, in which the prisoners, when their heads are turned towards the light, see the realities which cast their shadows upon the walls of their den. 'In this world of true knowledge the Idea of the Good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and when seen is inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the spiritual world; and this is the power upon which he who would act rationally in public or private life must fix his gaze.' This position is half-way between that attributed to Eucleides and the doctrine of Plotinus. The 'Idea of the Good' still belongs to the world of Real Being, and still, it would seem, subsumes the other Forms under itself; but the Good itself is 'beyond Reality.' It is not clear that Plato sanctions any goal of aspiration beyond this noblest of the Forms.

Alexandrian philosophy before Plotinus had pondered much upon the unknowable Godhead. To Philo, as a Jew, it was a dogma that no man may see God face to face, and live. The created cannot behold the uncreated. 'One must first become God—which is impossible—in order to be able to comprehend God.' Even Moses, though he 'entered into the thick darkness' where God dwells, could perceive nothing, and his prayer was answered only by a vision of the 'hinder parts' of the Eternal. God exists; it is folly to say more about Him than this. He has properties (ἰδιότης), but no qualities (ποιότης). We may call Him eternal, self-existent, omnipotent, for these predicates belong to Him alone. But God is 'better than the Good itself and the Beautiful itself: He can be apprehended by Himself alone.' Philo's God is above space and time; but not 'beyond Reality.'

Clement of Alexandria, as a Christian, feels the same objection to saying that God is 'beyond Reality.' Accordingly, he declares that God is or has οὐσία, but

outdoes the Neoplatonists by saying that He is 'beyond the One and above the Monad,' a phrase which seems to have no meaning. 'He is formless and nameless, though we sometimes give Him names.' Origen attaches less value than Clement to the 'negative road' as the way to understand God's nature; but he insists that a certain divine inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμός τις) is necessary for the knowledge of Him.

The doctrine has had a long history in later Christian theology. Augustine, whose earlier works are steeped in Plotinus, says that God is *essentia*, not *substantia*; perhaps God alone should be called *essentia*. 'We can know what God is not, but not what He is.' Dionysius the Areopagite describes God the Father as 'superessential indetermination,' 'the unity which unifies every unity,' 'the absolute no-thing which is above all reality.' 'No monad or triad,' he exclaims in a queer ebullition of jargon, 'can express the all-transcending hiddenness of the all-transcending superessentially superexisting super-Deity.' Erigena is not afraid to follow Plotinus in denying Being to the Absolute. Being, he says, is a defect, since it separates from the superessential Good. 'The things that are not are far better than those that are.' God, therefore, 'per excellentiam non immerito Nihilum vocatur.' God is above the category of relation; and therefore in the Godhead the Three Persons of the Trinity are fused. Eckhart, as we have seen, distinguishes between the Godhead and God. The Godhead is not Being, but the eternal potentiality of Being, containing within Himself all distinctions, as yet undeveloped. 'All things in God are one thing.' But Eckhart is determined not to deprive God of Being and Life. 'If I have said that God is not a Being and is above Being, I do not mean to deprive Him of Being, but to honour Being in Him.' But elsewhere he uses the familiar language of mysticism, calling the Godhead the silence, the darkness, or the desert. His theory of creation resembles that of Plotinus. 'We were in God eternally, like a work of art in the mind of a master.' His distinction between God and the Godhead enables him to insist, like a modern Hegelian, on the immanence of God in the world. Without the creatures, God 'would not be God.'

Plotinus makes the same distinction between the Absolute and the knowable God, though he is more careful than Eckhart to maintain that the creation of

the lower orders of Being is 'necessary' because the higher order is what it is, not at all in order that it may become what it ought to be. He is quite clear that the One must be independent of the world of Forms.

The One is 'beyond οὐσία, beyond activity, beyond νοῦς and νόησις. It is 'an activity beyond νοῦς and sense and life.' We may call it First Activity, or First Potency; since in the One there is no difference between δύναμις and ἐνέργεια; but strictly δύναμις and ἐνέργεια belong to οὐσία, and cannot properly be predicated of the Absolute. It has no limit or boundary, but is fundamentally infinite. It is, in short, ineffable. We can say what it is not, but not what it is. After ascribing to it the highest attributes that we can conceive, we must add, 'yet not these, but something better.'

We must not ascribe Will to the Absolute, if Will implies the desire for something not yet present. But we may say, 'It is what it willed to be,' for it is its own author. In a more detailed discussion, he says that the One is 'all Will,' and that 'there is nothing in him that is prior to his Will.' There is no real resemblance between this doctrine and the blind unconscious Will of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann. The One in Plotinus is not unconscious, but superconscious. It possesses a higher form of consciousness than the discursive reason, or than the intuitive perception of Spirit. Plotinus ever than the intuitive perception of Spirit. Plotinus calls it immediate apprehension (ἀθρόα ἐπιβολή). He is careful to explain that when we speak of Will in the Absolute, we are using words incorrectly. What we mean to assert is that the One posits himself (ὑφίστησιν ἑαυτόν), that there is no chance or contingency in him, and that he could never wish to be other than he is. In one curious passage he says that 'he is what he wishes (θέλει not βούλται) to be, or rather he projects (ἀπορρίπτει) what he wishes into the world of Reality.' The Absolute is essentially Will only as being his own cause: he is all Will, because there can be nothing outside him. He is also all necessity, because there can be no contingency in his life. Plotinus would have agreed with Mr. Bosanquet, that 'for the Absolute to be a Will, or purpose, would be a meaningless pursuit of nothing in particular.' The Absolute is all necessity, as being subject to no necessity. Being absolutely free, He is the cause of freedom in the world of Spirit. We may rightly call the One 'the giver of

freedom' (ἐλυθροποιόν). All teleology belongs to the finite world of becoming, in which the thoughts of God are transmuted into vital law. Nevertheless, the purposes which constitute the reality of psychical life, and which live as achievement in the spiritual world, flow directly from the One, who 'is what he willed to be.' Plotinus does not bind us to the frozen passivity of the God of Angelus Silesius:—

*'Wir beten: es gescheh, mein Herr und Gott, dein Wille;
Und sieh, er hat nicht Will', er ist ein ewge Stille.'*

Eckhart is nearer Plotinus when he says, 'He is God naturally, but not from nature; willingly, but not from will.'

Plotinus also answers in the negative the question whether the One thinks (νοῖ). But he certainly does not mean that his Absolute is wrapped in eternal slumber. It has a 'true νόησις,' different from that of νοῦς. He has 'self-discernment' (διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ), which implies a sort of self-consciousness. It differs from νόησις as being more instantaneous, the subject-object relation being quite transcended. The only reason why νόησις, and ordinary self-consciousness (συναίσθησις), are denied to the Absolute is that these actions imply a sort of duality. 'That which is absolutely self-sufficing does not even need itself.' The One abides in a state of 'wakefulness' (ἐγρώγορσις) beyond Being.'

We miss in Plotinus any clear statement that, in the words of Thomas Aquinas, 'God, in understanding himself, understands everything else. God sees himself by his essence; all other things he sees not in themselves but in himself, in so far as he contains in his essence the likeness of all other things that come from him.' Aristotle's God has no knowledge of the imperfect, and Plotinus does not speak decisively on the other side.

The criticism will certainly be made, that Plotinus, after protesting that nothing can be said of the Absolute, tells us a good deal about it or him, investing him in fact with the attributes of a personal God. The attributes of Spirit are, after all, ascribed to the First Principle, only per eminentiam, and with apologies for the weakness of human thought. We must not say that the Absolute wills, and yet he is all Will. We must not say that he thinks, and yet

he comprehends everything. We must not say that he is conscious, and yet he is more awake than we can ever be. Such a Being, it may be objected, is not the Absolute to whom the dialectic conducts; he is not 'beyond Reality,' but the reigning monarch of the real world.

I do not see how this criticism is to be met, any more than I can justify the various characteristics which Herbert Spencer gives to the Unknowable, and Hartmann to the Unconscious. The real question for the student of Neoplatonism is not whether the dialectic really leads to an Absolute 'beyond existence.' It does. The question is whether this Absolute can be the object of worship, or of contemplation, without at once descending into the sphere of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. The mystical vision of the One will be dealt with presently. Here we are concerned with a number of statements about the One, which are intended to make us understand what he is, though we know that strictly he is not. Plotinus was well aware that *omnis deternzinatio est negatio*; but one cannot worship the a privative. He would probably not have been seriously troubled by the above criticism, for he has no desire at all to separate his three Divine Principles sharply from each other. He might perhaps have accepted our suggestion that the God of practical religion is the universal Soul, the God of devout and thankful contemplation the Great Spirit, the God of our most inspired moments the Absolute. 'And these three are one.' This is not so for the dialectic, if we treat the dialectic as a logical structure leading to a climax; but we have seen that for the Platonist, dialectic is the method of acquiring knowledge of the eternal verities; and scholastic logic, which does not recognise the fluidity and interpenetration of concepts in the spiritual world, gains lucidity and cogency at the price of truth. However, I will not conceal my opinion that Plotinus tells us too much about 'the One.' The inevitable result is that his successors postulate some still more mysterious principle behind the Monad.

The One as Infinite

The One is 'fundamentally infinite.' When we remember that Matter was also defined as 'the infinite,' we may think that there is a danger of a 'meeting of

extremes,' such as, I think, really exists in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. The abstract idea of absolute fullness has no determinations to distinguish it from the abstract idea of absolute emptiness. If they are different, it may be argued, that is only because in the philosophy of Plotinus 'the One' has already begun to differentiate himself, and 'Matter' to receive forms. We are confessedly in a region where discursive thought is no longer adequate, and we cannot leap off our shadows. To mount above νοῦς, Plotinus himself warns us, is to fall outside it. There is a profound truth in the observation of Proclus, already quoted, that the extremes (at the top and bottom of the scale) are simple, but the intermediate are complex. But the extremes are no more identical than the 'religion' to which, in Bacon's aphorism, depth in philosophy recalls us, is identical with the religion from which a little philosophy estranges us. With regard to the conception of the Infinite, it is perhaps true to say that immeasurableness is revealed in the act of measuring. The fact of limit (πέρας) only implies the indefinite; the act of limiting implies the infinite. To know the infinite is a contradiction; for to know is to limit; but we know the fact of the infinite, for it is implied in the act of knowing.

It is a common criticism, brought against mysticism of the Indian type, that it ends in metaphysical nihilism. The mystic who tries to apprehend the infinite grasps only zero. As applied to the actual teaching of Indian thinkers, this criticism is based largely on Western misunderstanding of Eastern thought. Nirvana is not what Europeans have agreed to paint it. But the danger certainly exists—and the best writers on mysticism have fully admitted it—that we may grasp at a premature synthesis and simplification of experience, and so lose the rich content of spiritual life. The vacuity, passing almost into idiocy, of many contemplatives is an object-lesson in the consequences of this error. But no disciple of Plotinus is likely to fall into it. He teaches us that we must gain our soul first, and surrender it afterwards; there are no short cuts to the beatific vision. And the highest experience, if it comes to us, will be light, not darkness.

The question whether we ought to speak of God as infinite has often been raised. To the Platonist, infinity suggests the absence of Form, which in all objects of thought is an evil; to others it asserts freedom from all limitations,

and is therefore a proper term to apply to God. Rothe says, 'Absoluteness and infinitude are in no way identical conceptions. Infinitude is merely eternity with the idea of self-negation added. It cannot, therefore, in any sense be predicated of God. There is no worse, no poorer definition of the Absolute than the word infinite. God in his immanent being is to be considered as entirely outside space and time, and therefore is just as little infinite as finite.' The root of this objection is that infinitude is an idea which belongs to space; to ascribe it to God is the same blunder as to explain eternity as endless existence in time. But there is no harm in adopting the frankly metaphorical expression of the Schoolmen (following Augustine) that God has his centre everywhere, and his circumference nowhere.

The One as First Cause and Final Cause

The Absolute as the One is the first cause; as the Good it is the final cause of all that is. Plotinus is quite explicit in asserting the causality of the Absolute. But it must be remembered that the spiritual and phenomenal worlds are coeternal with the One, so that causality means little more than the assertion of a hierarchy in Reality, leading up to an all-embracing Absolute in which everything is contained, and which in the world of becoming is the primary source and final consummation of every process. The following quotation> will show in what relation the One stands to the world of νοητά. 'Whatever is engendered by another resides either in the principle which made it, or in another being, if there is one between it and its source; for that which springs from another, and needs another to come into existence, needs another everywhere, and therefore resides in another. The lowest things are in the next lowest, the higher in the next highest, and so on up to the first principle. This first principle, having nothing above it, cannot be in another; but it contains all the others, embracing them without dividing itself among them, and possessing them without being possessed by them.' The One, he goes on, is everywhere and nowhere; all things depend on it, and differ in value according as the dependence is closer or more remote.

Plotinus was well aware that it is not easy to show how plurality can emanate from unity, Being from the super-essential. Physical science is equally unable to account for differentiation, and professes ignorance as to whether ether, homogeneous electrons, atoms only quantitatively different, and elements with very different properties, are all modifications of some πρώτη ὕλη. The difficulty is the same whether we begin at the top or the bottom of the scale. To regard this problem as an inconsistency specially characteristic of Neoplatonism seems to me unintelligent criticism. The solution offered by Plotinus is that of creation. The Absolute does not cease to be the Absolute by creating a world wholly dependent on itself, nor does Spirit lose anything by creating the Soul-world. To say that the Absolute must be God plus the world seems to me like saying that the real Shakespeare is the poet plus the folio edition of his works. As to the motive and manner of creation, it is obvious that we cannot be expected to know much. 'How God creates the world we can never understand,' says Prof. Ward; and many other philosophers have urged that we cannot expect to know. But if, with Heracleitus, we assume that the 'road up' and the 'road down' must be the same, and if we can show, as Plotinus has shown, that there is nowhere any salto mortale in the ascent of the Soul to God, it seems reasonable to infer that there are no unbridged chasms in the creation of the various orders of Being by the Absolute, though we cannot understand the first stages, because we are not God. We have not even any secure footing in the Spiritual World, the 'second nature'; we do not even know our own highest selves. As Malebranche says very well: 'My inner self reveals only that I am, that I think, that I desire, that I feel, that I suffer, etc.; but it does not reveal to me what I am, the nature of my feelings, of my passions, of my pain, nor the relations of all these to one another, because, having no idea of my soul, not beholding its archetype in God, I am not able to discover either what it is, or the modes of which it is capable.' If this is true, any theory which seemed to explain to us the origin of the spiritual world would be justly suspect. Nevertheless, Plotinus throws out some suggestions for countering objections. The existence of the world is due to the necessity of there being 'a second nature' (δευτέρα φύσις). If there were no necessity for each principle 'to give of its own to another,' the Good would not be the Good, Spirit would not be Spirit, and Soul would not be Soul. Without Spirit,

the One would have no object for its activities; it would be alone and deserted, at a standstill. For activity is not possible in a being which has no inner multiplicity, unless it acts on another. 'The One could not be alone; if it were, all things would remain hidden, having no form in the One.' There is a 'mysterious power' (ἄφατος δύναμις) which impels each nature to create, and go on creating down to the lowest limit of existence. Thus only can its latent qualities be unfurled (ἐξλίττωσθαι). Why should we suppose that the One would remain standing still in itself? From envy? Or from want of power, though it is the power of all things? The creation is a kind of overflow (οἶον ὑπερρῦη) of the One. It is like the efflux of light and heat from the sun, which loses nothing in imparting itself. Another favourite word is 'dependence' (ἐξαρτασθαι), which comes from Aristotle. There is an unbroken chain from the One to Matter and back. The One is present to all grades, since it penetrates all things with power. The chain is so continuous that 'wherever the third rank is present, there is also the second, and the first.'

The passages just quoted have a Hegelian sound. They suggest that the world is as necessary to the Absolute as the Absolute is to the world. Whether this view is right or wrong, it is not the philosophy of Plotinus. He insists upon the complete independence of the One in many places; the following sentence may serve as a sample. 'The Good is the principle on which all depends, to which all aspires, from which all proceeds, and which all need. In itself it is in need of nothing (ἀννδές), sufficient for itself, wanting nothing, the measure and term of all things, giving out of itself Spirit and Reality.' The 'necessity' which causes the real world to proceed from the First Principle is akin to the necessity for self-expression on the part of an artist; it is not a vital necessity of growth or self-preservation. The Hegelian view, it need hardly be said, takes the world into the Absolute; for otherwise the Absolute would need something outside itself, which is a contradiction. Further, it seems to make the time-process an essential factor in the life of the Absolute; for according to this philosophy, as stated by its founder, God only comes to Himself in human history. It is no doubt difficult to say whether Hegel really means that God becomes, through history, something that He was not before, for he oscillates continually between two different kinds of development, the dialectical and the historical. Some Hegelians repudiate the notion of real progress in the

Divine life, and speak instead of self-communication. This brings them much nearer to Plotinus, who himself is found saying that the One 'would have been hidden' without a world. But the Hegelians, if I understand them, would say that without a world the Godhead would have been hidden from itself. This I do not think that Plotinus would admit. In Biblical language God made the world 'to make His glory to be known.' But such an expression has no meaning as applied to the inner life of the One. The activity of the Absolute is purely one-sided; there is no reaction upon it.

I can imagine a critic saying: 'The One of Plotinus seems to me to be only an objectification of the categories of Cause and Substance, which analysis has driven out of the real world. The infinite regress has led him to take refuge in a citadel beyond the limits of thought, where he is unassailable because he has cut his communications with Reality.'

But for Plotinus there is no infinite regress, because things in time are not causes. Nor is it true that Substance, if by this is meant οὐσία, has been driven out of the real world. It is not the infinite regress of causation, but the infinite progress of aspiration, which leads us to the furthest confines of Reality, and beyond them to the fountain-head of all that is. We cannot ever say: 'Now I have reached the top, and may stop climbing.' 'Un Dieu défini est un Dieu fini.' But Plotinus is as well aware as any of his critics that his titles for the One are attempts to name the Nameless.

The Path of Beauty

Plotinus calls the Absolute indifferently the One and the Good; he does not call it the Beautiful. In one passage he seems to put the Beautiful in a slightly lower place than the One or the Good; but he half withdraws this judgment. 'A man will first ascend to Spirit and will there behold all beautiful forms, and will say that this (namely, the world of Forms) is beauty; for all things in them are beautiful, being the offspring and essence of Spirit. Beyond this, as we affirm, is the nature of the Good, which radiates the Beautiful in front of itself (προββλημένον τὸ καλὸν πρὸ αὐτῆς ἔχουσαν). So that, speaking shortly, the Good is the First-Beautiful. If we wish to make distinctions within the spiritual world, we shall say that the Beautiful in the spiritual world is the place of the ideas, but that the Good is beyond this, as the source and beginning of the Beautiful. Or we may put the Good and the First-Beautiful on the same level.' Other passages seem to show that he does not wish to put the Beautiful on a lower plane, especially that in which he says, 'he who has not yet seen him desires him as the Good, but he who has, admires him as the Beautiful.' It is true that the One 'does not wish to be beautiful'; but the One does not 'wish' to be anything, having in itself the potency of all things. The One is 'the flower of all that is beautiful,' 'beauty above beauty.' It may, as we have seen, be identified with the 'First-Beautiful.' Perhaps the clearest passage about the relations of the One and the Beautiful is . . . We do not begin to perceive and know the Beautiful until we 'know and are awake'; but 'the Good is inborn, and present to us even when we are asleep'; and 'it does not amaze its beholders, because it is always with them.' The 'unconscious desire' (ἀναίσθητος ἔφσις) for the Good proves it to be 'more original' (ἀρχαιότερον) than the Beautiful. Further, all are satisfied with the Good; but not all with the Beautiful, which some think is 'advantageous for itself, not for them.' Beauty, too, is more superficial and subjective; people are satisfied to be thought beautiful, but not to be thought good. Again, the enjoyment of Beauty is exciting and mixed with pain; that of the Good is a calm delight. Even Yonder, the Beautiful needs the Good, not the Good the Beautiful.

These reflections are rather surprising, at any rate till we remember that 'the Good' is not to be identified with 'the morally good.' On this more must be

said presently. The curious opinion that the enjoyment of Beauty is ‘mixed with pain’ seems to come from Plato, for whom sex-love, ἔρως γλυκύπικρος, is the type of spiritual love. The position of inferiority here ascribed to the Beautiful is revoked in . . . ‘When the Soul is raised to Spirit, it becomes more beautiful. Spirit, and the gifts that flow from Spirit, are its proper Beauty, for only when it becomes Spirit is Soul truly Soul. Wherefore it is rightly said that, for the Soul, to become good and beautiful is to be made like God, because from Him comes the beautiful and the other part of reality. Or rather we should say that Reality is Beauty, and “the other nature” is the Ugly. The Ugly and the First-Evil are the same, and, on the other hand, Good and Beautiful are the same, or the Good and Beauty. We may therefore study Beautiful and Good together, and Ugly and Bad together. We must give the primacy to Beauty, which is also the Good. Then follows Spirit, which is identical with the Beautiful. Soul is beautiful through Spirit; other things that are beautiful are so through the Soul which forms them, including beautiful actions and practices. Even bodies, which are reckoned beautiful, are the creation of Soul; for being a Divine thing, and as it were a part of the Beautiful, it makes all that it touches and controls beautiful, so far as they are able to receive it.’ Thus he distinguishes Beauty (καλλονη), which he identifies with the One, from the Beautiful (τὸ καλόν), which is Spirit. The One, being formless (ἄμορφον καὶ ἀνίδον) could hardly be τὸ καλόν. ‘Beauty is not embodied in forms’ (τὸ κάλλος οὐ μμόρφωται), but τὸ καλόν is. ‘The First-Beautiful, and Beauty, are formless, and Beauty Yonder is the nature of spiritual Good.’ The one is ‘the beginning and end of Beauty.’

When we take these passages together, we find that Plotinus has three names for his Absolute—the One, the Good, and Beauty. These are the three attributes of Spirit, carried up to their primary source, above the place where the streams divide and assume those determinations which, as Spinoza says, are always negations. There is a certain awkwardness in correlating ‘the One’ and ‘the Good,’ not with ‘the Beautiful,’ but with ‘Beauty’; but the reasons for it will now be apparent.

A more serious criticism is that the One, thus characterised, is a Triad of Platonic Ideas, and not the hidden is, I source from which all the Ideas flow.

Plotinus is, I think, well aware of this. Strictly, though, the three attributes of Spirit, however exalted to their ideal perfection, are the first determinations of the Absolute, and not the Absolute itself. The 'Spirit in love' worships the One as the fountain of these Divine ideals, which are the highest things that we can know. Plotinus might, no doubt, have given more consideration to the relations of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty to each other, especially as the rival claims of these three ideals give rise to some serious practical and moral problems. He has not thought it necessary, because it has never occurred to him to isolate the intellect, or the artistic sense, or the moral consciousness, in the way that artistic modern thinkers have done.

The Path of Perfection

'It is essential to the understanding not only of Plato but of Greek philosophy generally, to realise the place held by "the Good."' Three ideas are here inseparable () the Good is the supreme object of all desire and aspiration. () The Good is the condition of knowledge; it is that which makes the world intelligible. () The Good is the creative and sustaining cause of the world. 'The Good' did not in the first instance involve any moral qualities. It meant the object of desire—that which we most want. Our Good is that for which we would give up everything else. Man is always a creature of means and ends; he is a rational being, who lives for something. This explains the connexion between reason and the Good. Greek thought is intensely teleological, not in the sense that the world was made for men, for 'the universe contains many beings more divine than man,' but 'the nature of a thing is its end,' the object or ideal which it strives to realise. The good life is directed towards the most worthy end, and the pursuit of this end is the immanent principle which gives life its meaning and character. 'Virtue' (ἀρετή) is not necessarily a moral quality; it is that which makes anything good of its kind. Thirdly, the Good makes things what they are. The reality of things is what they mean, what they are 'good for'; and it is the Good which gives them their place, and assigns them their proper task (ἔργον).

It has been said that Plotinus alters Plato's doctrine of the Good, inasmuch as for Plato the Good is within the circle of the Ideas, while for Plotinus it is above them. But this overstates the difference. For Plato the Good is the supreme source of light, of which everything good, true, and beautiful in the world is the reflexion. In the Republic he says that we must look at all other Forms in the light of the Form of the Good, which is the starting-point of knowledge. The Good is beyond knowledge and being, or at least beyond our knowledge of being. Beauty and Truth are the Good under certain forms. The question has often been raised whether in Plato the Form (or Idea) of the Good is the same as God. The discussion is not a very profitable one, for $\theta\acute{o}\varsigma$ is by no means an equivalent of the God of the modern theist. But the identification is impossible, because for Plato God is a Soul, not a Form. The Form of the Good is rather the pattern which the Creator copies in making the world.

It is undoubtedly true that Plotinus exalts 'the Good' to a more inaccessible altitude than Plato has done. It is not for us only, but for the highest intelligence, that the Good is 'beyond being.' But if the Good is the Absolute, the question at once arises whether we can rightly use such a name for it as 'the Good.' Plotinus insists that the Absolute cannot be 'the Beautiful,' but Beauty, or the source of the Beautiful. Why does he not say that it cannot be the Good, but Goodness, or the source of the Good? In fact, this is his view; but in loyalty to Plato he retains the name, and explains that in reference to us the One is the Good, and so may be called by this name, though it is not strictly accurate.

Plotinus dissociates 'the Good' from the idea of mere moral excellence. 'Virtue is not the Good, but a Good.' It is undoubtedly true that morality, as such, must be transcended in the Absolute. Morality lives in a radical antithesis; it is what it is only in contrast with its opposite. So Rothe says that the good in God is not moral good. Moral good is becoming and is destined to become real good, but it has not yet attained perfection. In attaining this perfection it ceases to be moral good. But that which only exists as one side of an antithesis cannot be the Absolute, or even fully real. We must therefore be careful not to give a strictly ethical sense to the Good as a name of the One.

The Good, for Plotinus, is unity as the goal of desire. This desire, he says, is universal. The Good is the fulfilment of the natural desire (ὄρξις) for self-completion and self-transcendence, which every finite centre of consciousness feels. Our life indeed is that desire; all life is a *nisus* towards its proper goal. This unity which is the Good of all finite life is also the source of all individual being. All being begins and ends in the Good. Spirit flows over into Soul, unconsciously. Soul returns to Spirit, consciously; and Spirit is rooted in the One. 'From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

Perhaps we should understand Plotinus' supreme category better if we called it 'the Perfect' instead of the Good. It is *valor valorum*, as Nicholas of Cusa says of God. Its characteristic is that 'it needs nothing. It is quite in accordance with his usual method when Plotinus reminds us that 'the Good' which we recognise as such is not the Absolute Good, but is relative to the stage which we have reached ourselves. 'The Good of Matter is Form; for Matter, if it were conscious, would receive it with pleasure. The Good of the Body is Soul; for without it, it could neither exist nor persist. The Good of the Soul is virtue; then, rising higher, it is Spirit. The Good of Spirit is that which we call the First Principle. Each of these Goods produces something in the object of which it is the Good; it gives it either order and beauty, or life, or wisdom and happiness. Finally, the Good gives to Spirit an activity, which emanates from the Good, and spreads over it what we call its light.' In the same chapter he tries to explain how Plato in the *Philebus* came to 'mix pleasure with the end [of life], thereby making the Good not simple, nor in Spirit only.' 'Plato was not trying to determine what is the Good absolutely, but the Good for man'; the two are not the same. He is anxious to prove that Plato's view was really the same as his own. 'Plato,' he says, 'establishes three degrees in the hierarchy of beings. Everything is ranged round the king of all. He speaks here of things of the first rank. He adds: That which is of the second rank is ranged round the Second Principle, and that which is of the third rank round the Third Principle. He also says that the First Principle is the father of cause—meaning Spirit by "cause"; for he makes Spirit the Demiurge; and also that Spirit creates Soul in the "bowl" of which he speaks. The cause being *Noûς*, its "father" must be the Absolute Good, the Principle above Spirit and above existence.' He is on safer ground when he says that the 'pure and

unmingled Spirit' of Anaxagoras is by definition detached from all sensible things, and that the 'perpetual flux' of Heracleitus is meaningless unless there is also an eternal and unchanging One. Aristotle, he says truly, by making his highest Principle 'think itself,' places it below the absolute One. The Pythagoreans, as he sees, are nearest to his own theory.

'Good,' in relation to finite experience, is the perfection to which each grade in the hierarchy aspires, and having attained which it passes into the next stage above. 'All things strive after life, after immortality, and after activity.' True life and true Spirit are identical, and both come from the Good. The Ideas—the spiritual world and its contents—are good, but not the Good. We cannot stop at the world of Spirit, as if the First Principle was to be found there. 'The Soul does not aspire to Spirit alone. Spirit is not our supreme end, and all does not aspire to Spirit, while all aspires to the Good; beings which do not possess νοῦς do not all seek to possess it, while those which do possess it are not content to stop there. Νοῦς is sought as the result of reasoning; but the Good is desired before argument. If the object of desire is to live, to live always, and to act, this is desired not as Spirit, but as good, as coming from good and leading to good; for it is only thus that we desire life.' It is then natural for the Soul, and still more for Spirit, to aspire to the absolutely perfect. Nothing else contents us. 'When a man sees this light, he moves towards it, and rejoices in the light which plays over the spiritual world. Even here, we love bodies not for themselves, but for the beauty which shines in them. For each νοητόν is what it is in itself; but it only becomes an object of desire when the Good gives it colour, bestowing grace upon the object and love upon the subject. As soon as the Soul receives into itself the effluence from above, it is moved, it is filled with holy ecstasy, and becomes love. Before that, it is not moved by the sight of Spirit, for all its beauty; its beauty is inactive, till it receives the light of the Good; and the Soul lies supine before it and wholly inactive, cold and stupid even in the presence of Spirit. But when warmth from the Good enters into it, it becomes strong and wide awake, and though troubled by what lies near at hand, it ascends more lightly to that which a kind of memory tells it to be greater. And as long as there is anything higher than what is present to it, it rises, lifted up naturally by that which implanted the love. Beyond the spiritual world it rises, but it cannot pass beyond the Good, because there is nothing

beyond. If it abides in the region of Spirit, it beholds indeed beautiful and noble things, but is not completely in possession of all that it seeks. For the world of Spirit is like a face which does not attract us in spite of its beauty, because no grace plays upon its beauty. Even here we are charmed not by symmetry as such, but by the beauty which shines upon it. A living face is more beautiful than a dead one; a statue which is full of life, as we say, is more beautiful than one which appears lifeless, though the latter be more symmetrical; a living animal is more beautiful than a picture of one. This is because the living appears to us more desirable; it has a soul; it is more like the Good; it is so because it is coloured by the light of the Good, and enlightened by it is more wide awake and lighter; and in its turn it lightens its own environment [the body], and as far as possible makes it good and awakens it.'

This very remarkable passage shows that Plotinus was not insensible to the feeling of chill which repels many moderns from Platonism. The world of ideas, of perfect forms, of stable beauty and perfection—is it not after all 'faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null'? Is it not too much like the beautiful but cold and motionless marble statues in which the Greek spirit expressed itself so perfectly? We have seen that Plotinus by no means intended his spiritual world to have this character. It is to be a world of life, activity, and ceaseless creativeness. But as the apex of a dialectical pyramid it may even seem most forbidding. If the Soul, on getting there, were to say, I see all to admire, but nothing to love, what answer should be made? Some later philosophers have shrunk from the cold white light of the eternal and unchanging, and have willingly embraced the warm colours and rapid changes of the world of appearance—a lower sphere, doubtless, but better fitted for such beings as we are to live in. So Schiller invokes Colour rather than Light to be his companion.

*'Wohne, du ewiglich Eines, dort bei dem ewiglich Einen!
Farbe, du wechselnde, komm' freundlich zum Menschen herab.'*

Plotinus could not have made this invocation without being false to the first principle of his philosophy. The Soul is forbidden to acquiesce in any downward movement. The only escape from difficulties is to press ever

upward, in the confidence that all disharmonies will be resolved, all obstacles left behind, as we resolutely turn our backs upon change and strife, and follow the gleam of the pure and undivided Unity. Even in heaven the Soul is not content with itself. It must still aspire, and its aspiration is purest and keenest when it is in full view of the very highest. It is then that the Soul takes fire, and is carried away by love. The fullest life is the fullest love; and the love comes from the celestial light which streams forth from the Absolute One, the Absolute Good, that supreme Principle 'which made life, and made Spirit, the source and beginning, which gave Spirit to all spiritual things and life to all living things.' But, we may ask, what is there in the idea of absolute perfection, raised above all forms and all existence, to kindle this passionate love and adoration in the Soul? If we have not loved our brother whom we have seen, and this warm world of adventure and change, which claims us as its own, how can we love the Godhead whom no man hath seen or can see, who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto? The best answer to these questions is to consider what Plotinus has to tell us about the vision of the One. For it is unquestionably a genuine experience of his own—this ecstatic love of the Absolute. Moreover, the great army of mystics, Christian, Pagan, Mohammedan, corroborate all that the great Neoplatonist describes to us. The 'Spirit in love' (νοῦς ἐρῶν) is the culmination of personal religion; and the object of this adoration is not the limited half-human God of popular religion, but the ineffable mysterious Power to whom we shrink from ascribing any human attributes whatever.

The Vision of the One

We can know the unknowable, because in our deepest ground we are the unknowable. This is the ultimate doctrine of the Neoplatonic metaphysics. There is a mystery in ourselves, and in the objects of our knowledge, which the intellect cannot penetrate. Even the Spirit, while it occupies itself with itself as Spirit, with its intuitive power of seeing as Spirit, and with the world of the One-Many in which the Spirit beholds itself, cannot pierce to the depths of this mystery. Only when the Spirit is carried out of itself by aspiring love, are the unplumbed depths of its being stirred, and it becomes for a moment that which it can never know, the absolute Ground of all being. In this experience the identification of Thinker and Thought is so complete that we cannot speak of knowledge or consciousness. We may speak of “vision,” or ‘immediate apprehension,’ but these and any other words fail to express what they aim at. Eckhart says, ‘The eye with which I see God is the same with which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one eye, and one sight, and one knowledge, and one love.’ This can only be true of those rare moments of ecstasy when the saint or seer is ‘caught up into the third heaven,’ and no longer knows whether he is ‘in the body or out of the body.’ In this state, the very conditions of consciousness are suspended, the Soul being more closely identified with the One than νοῦς is with νοητά; in other words, the subject-object relation is left behind.

The favourite Christian doctrine, best known in the form immortalised by Pascal, ‘Tu ne me chercherais pas, si tu ne m'avais déjà trouvé,’ is the Plotinian form of the ontological argument. It occurs in Bernard (*De Diligendo Deo*, .), ‘nemo te quaerere valet, nisi qui prius invenerit.’

But we will let Plotinus expound his doctrine and give us (so far as that is possible) his experience, in his own words.

‘What then is there better than this wisest life, exempt from fault and error? What is better than Spirit which embraces all? What is better than universal life and universal Spirit? If we answer, That which made these things, we must go on to ask how it made them; and if no higher principle manifests itself, the argument will proceed no further, but will stop at this point. But we must go

higher, for many other reasons and especially because the principle which we seek is the Absolute which is independent of all things; for things are incapable of sufficing for themselves, and each of them has a share in the One, from which it follows that none of them is the One... That which makes being and independence is not itself being and independence, but above both. Is it enough to say this and pass on? Or is the Soul in labour with something more? Perhaps it must bring forth, filled as it is with travail-pangs, after hastening eagerly towards the Absolute. Nay, we must try rather to charm her, if we can find any magic spell against her pains. Perhaps something of what we have already said, if it were often repeated, might act as a charm. Or where shall we find another, a new charm? For although it permeates all Truth, and therefore the Truth of which we participate, nevertheless it escapes us when we try to speak of it or even to think of it. For the discursive reason, if it wishes to say anything, must seize first one element of the Truth and then another; such are the conditions of discursive thought. But how can discursive thought apprehend the absolutely simple? It is enough to apprehend it by a kind of spiritual intuition (νορῶς ἐφάψασθαι). But in this act of apprehension we have neither the power nor the time to say anything about it; afterwards we can reason about it. We may believe that we have really seen, when a sudden light illumines the Soul; for this light comes from the One and is the One. And we may think that the One is present, when, like another god, he illumines the house of him who calls upon him; for there would be no light without his presence. Even so the Soul is dark that does not behold him; but when illumined by him, it has what it desired, and this is the true end and aim of the Soul, to apprehend that light, and to behold it by that light itself, which is no other than the light by which it sees. For that which we seek to behold is the light which gives us light, even as we can only see the sun by the light of the sun. How then can this come to us? Strip thyself of everything.'

'We must not be surprised that that which excites the keenest of longings is without any form, even spiritual form, since the Soul itself, when inflamed with love for it, puts off all the form which it had, even that which belongs to the spiritual world. For it is not possible to see it, or to be in harmony with it, while one is occupied with anything else. The Soul must remove from itself

good and evil and everything else, that it may receive the One alone, as the One is alone. When the Soul is so blessed, and is come to it, or rather when it manifests its presence, when the Soul turns away from visible things and makes itself as beautiful as possible and becomes like the One; (the manner of preparation and adornment is known to those who practise it;) and seeing the One suddenly appearing in itself, for there is nothing between, nor are they any longer two, but one; for you cannot distinguish between them, while the vision lasts; it is that union of which the union of earthly lovers, who wish to blend their being with each other, is a copy. The Soul is no longer conscious of the body, and cannot tell whether it is a man or a living being or anything real at all; for the contemplation of such things would seem unworthy, and it has no leisure for them; but when, after having sought the One, it finds itself in its presence, it goes to meet it and contemplates it instead of itself. What itself is when it gazes, it has no leisure to see. When in this state the Soul would exchange its present condition for nothing, no, not for the very heaven of heavens; for there is nothing better, nothing more blessed than this. For it can mount no higher; all other things are below it, however exalted they be. It is then that it judges rightly and knows that it has what it desired, and that there is nothing higher. For there is no deception there; where could one find anything truer than the True? What it says, that it is, and it speaks afterwards, and speaks in silence, and is happy, and is not deceived in its happiness. Its happiness is no titillation of the bodily senses; it is that the Soul has become again what it was formerly, when it was blessed. All the things which once pleased it, power, wealth, beauty, science, it declares that it despises; it could not say this if it had not met with something better than these. It fears no evil, while it is with the One, or even while it sees him; though all else perish around it, it is content, if it can only be with him; so happy is it.'

'The soul is so exalted that it thinks lightly even of that spiritual intuition which it formerly treasured. For spiritual perception involves movement, and the Soul now does not wish to move. It does not call the object of its vision Spirit, although it has itself been transformed into Spirit before the vision and lifted up into the abode of Spirits. When the Soul arrives at the intuition of the One, it leaves the mode of spiritual perception. Even so a traveller, entering into a palace, admires at first the various beauties which adorn it; but

when the Master appears, he alone is the object of attention. By continually contemplating the object before him, the spectator sees it no more. The vision is confounded with the object seen, and that which was before object becomes to him the state of seeing, and he forgets all else. The Spirit has two powers. By one of them it has a spiritual perception of what is within itself, the other is the receptive intuition by which it perceives what is above itself. The former is the vision of the thinking Spirit, the latter is the Spirit in love. For when the Spirit is inebriated with the nectar, it falls in love, in simple contentment and satisfaction; and it is better for it to be so intoxicated than to be too proud for such intoxication.'

'If you are perplexed because the One is none of those things which you know, apply yourself to them first, and look forth out of them; but so look, as not to direct your intellect to externals. For it does not lie in one place and not in another, but it is present everywhere to him who can touch it, and not to him who cannot. As in other matters one cannot think of two things at once, and must add nothing extraneous to the object of thought, if one wishes to identify oneself with it, so here we may be sure that it is impossible for one who has in his soul any extraneous image to conceive of the One while that image distracts his attention. Just as we said that Matter must be without qualities of its own, if it is to receive the forms of all things, so a fortiori must the Soul be formless if it is to receive the fullness and illumination of the First Principle. If so, the Soul must forsake all that is external, and turn itself wholly to that which is within; it will not allow itself to be distracted by anything external, but will ignore them all, as at first by not attending to them, so now last by not seeing them; it will not even know itself; and so it will come to the vision of the One and will be united with it; and then, after a sufficient converse with it, it will return and bring word, if it be possible, to others of its heavenly intercourse. Such probably was the converse which Minos was fabled to have had with Zeus, remembering which he made the laws which were the image of that converse, being inspired to be a lawgiver by the divine touch. Perhaps, however, a Soul which has seen much of the heavenly world may think politics unworthy of itself and may prefer to remain above. God, as Plato says, is not far from every one of us he is present with all, though they know him not. Men flee away from him, or rather from

themselves. They cannot grasp him from whom they have fled, nor when they have lost themselves can they find another, any more than a child who is mad and out of his mind can know his father. But he who has learnt to know himself will know also whence he is.

‘If a Soul has known itself throughout its course, it is aware that its natural motion has not been in a straight line (except during some deflection from the normal) but rather in a circle round a centre; and that this centre is itself in motion round that from which it proceeds. On this centre the Soul depends, and attaches itself thereto, as all Souls ought to do, but only the Souls of gods do so always. It is this that makes them gods. For a god is closely attached to this centre; those further from it are average men, and animals. Is then this centre of the Soul the object of our search? Or must we think of something else, some point at which all centres as it were coincide. We must remember that our “circles” and “centres” are only metaphors. The Soul is no “circle” like the geometrical figure; we call it a circle because the archetypal nature is in it and around it, and because it is derived from this first principle, and all the more because the Souls as wholes are separated from the body. But now, since part of us is held down by the body (as if a man were to have his feet under water), we touch the centre of all things with our own centre—that part which is not submerged—as the centres of the greatest circles coincide with the centre of the enveloping sphere, and then rest. If these circles were corporeal and not psychic, the coincidence of their centres would be spatial, and they would lie around a centre somewhere in space; but since the Souls belong to the spiritual world, and the One is above even Spirit, we must consider that their contact is through other powers—those which connect subject and object in the world of Spirit, and further, that the perceiving Spirit is present in virtue of its likeness and identity, and unites with its like without hindrance. For bodies cannot have this close association with each other, but incorporeal things are not kept apart by bodies; they are separated from each other not by distance, but by unlikeness and difference. Where there is no unlikeness, they are united with each other. The One, which has no unlikeness, is always present; we are so only when we have no unlikeness. The One does not strive to encircle us, but we strive to encircle it. We always move round the One, but we do not always fix our gaze upon it: we are like a choir

of singers who stand round the conductor, but do not always sing in time because their attention is diverted to some external object; when they look at the conductor they sing well and are really with him. So we always move round the One; if we did not, we should be dissolved and no longer exist; but we do not always look towards the One. When we do, we attain the end of our existence, and our repose, and we no longer sing out of tune, but form in very truth a divine chorus round the One.

‘In this choral dance the Soul sees the fountain of life and the fountain of Spirit, the source of Being, the cause of Good, the root of Soul. These do not flow out of the One in such a way as to diminish it; for we are not dealing with material quantities, else the products of the One would be perishable, whereas they are eternal, because their source remains not divided among them, but constant. Therefore the products too are permanent, as the light remains while the sun remains. For we are not cut off from our source nor separated from it, even though the bodily nature intervenes and draws us towards itself, but we breathe and maintain our being in our source, which does not first give itself and then withdraw, but is always supplying us, as long as it is what it is. But we are more truly alive when we turn towards it, and in this lies our well-being. To be far from it is isolation and diminution. In it our Soul rests, out of reach of evil; it has ascended to a region which is pure from all evil; there it has spiritual vision, and is exempt from passion and suffering; there it truly lives. For our present life, without God, is a mere shadow and mimicry of the true life. But life yonder is an activity of the Spirit, and by its peaceful activity it engenders gods also, through its contact with the One, and Beauty, and Righteousness, and Virtue. For these are the offspring of a Soul which is filled with God, and this is its beginning and end—its beginning because from this it had its origin, its end because the Good is there, and when it comes there it becomes what it was. For our life in this world is but a falling away, an exile, and loss of the Soul's wings. The natural love which the Soul feels proves that the Good is there; this is why paintings and myths make Psyche the bride of Cupid. Because the Soul is different from God, and yet springs from him, she loves him of necessity; when she is yonder she has the heavenly love, when she is here below, the vulgar. For yonder dwells the heavenly Aphrodite, but here she is vulgarised and corrupted, and every Soul

is Aphrodite. This is figured in the allegory of the birthday of Aphrodite, and Love who was born with her. Hence it is natural for the Soul to love God and to desire union with Him, as the daughter of a noble father feels a noble love. But when, descending to generation, the Soul, deceived by the false promises of a lover, exchanges its divine love for a mortal love, it is separated from its father and submits to indignities; but afterwards it is ashamed of these disorders and purifies itself and returns to its father and is happy. Let him who has not had this experience consider how blessed a thing it is in earthly love to obtain that which one most desires, although the objects of earthly loves are mortal and injurious and loves of shadows, which change and pass; since these are not the things which we truly love, nor are they our good, nor what we seek. But yonder is the true object of our love, which it is possible to grasp and to live with and truly to possess, since no envelope of flesh separates us from it. He who has seen it knows what I say, that the Soul then has another life, when it comes to God and having come possesses him, and knows, when in that state, that it is in the presence of the dispenser of the true life, and that it needs nothing further. On the contrary, it must put off all else, and stand in God alone, which can only be when we have pruned away all else that surrounds us. We must then hasten to depart hence, to detach ourselves as much as we can from the body to which we are unhappily bound, to endeavour to embrace God with all our being, and to leave no part of ourselves which is not in contact with him. Then we can see Him and ourselves, as far as is permitted: we see ourselves glorified, full of spiritual light, or rather we see ourselves as pure, subtle, ethereal, light; we become divine, or rather we know ourselves to be divine. Then indeed is the flame of life kindled, that flame which, when indeed back to earth, sinks with us.

‘Why then does not the Soul abide yonder? Because it has not yet wholly left its earthly abode. But the time will come when it will enjoy the vision without interruption, no longer troubled with the hindrances of the body. The part of the Soul which is troubled is not the part which sees, but the other part, when the part which sees is idle, though it ceases not from that knowledge which comes of demonstrations, conjectures, and the dialectic. But in the vision that which sees is not reason (λόγος), but something greater than and prior to reason, something presupposed by reason, as is the object of vision. He who

then sees himself, when he sees will see himself as a simple being, will be united to himself as such, will feel himself become such. We ought not even to say that he will sees, but he will be that which he sees, if indeed it is possible any longer to distinguish seer and seen, and not boldly to affirm that the two are one. In this state the seer does not see or distinguish or imagine two things; he becomes another, he ceases to be himself and to belong to himself. He belongs to Him and is one with Him, like two concentric circles; they are one when they coincide, and two only when they are separated. It is only in this sense that the Soul is other. Therefore this vision is hard to describe. For how can one describe, as other than oneself, that which, when one saw it, seemed to be one with oneself?

‘This is no doubt why in the mysteries we are forbidden to reveal them to the uninitiated. That which is divine is ineffable, and cannot be shown to those who have not had the happiness to see it. Since in the vision there were not two things, but seer and seen were one (for the seeing was no seeing but a merging), if a man could preserve the memory of what he was when he was mingled with the Divine, he would have in himself an image of Him. For he was then one with Him, and retained no difference, either in relation to himself or to others. Nothing stirred within him, neither anger nor concupiscence nor even reason or spiritual perception or his own personality, if we may say so. Caught up in an ecstasy, tranquil and God-possessed, he enjoyed an imperturbable calm; shut up in his proper essence he declined not to either side, he turned not even to himself; he was in a state of perfect stability; he had become stability itself. The Soul then occupies itself no more even with beautiful things; it is exalted above the Beautiful, it passes the choir of the virtues. Even as when a man who enters the sanctuary of a temple leaves behind him the statues in the temple, they are the objects which he will see first when he leaves the sanctuary after he has seen what is within, and entered there into communion, not with statues and images, but with the Deity itself. Perhaps we ought not to speak of vision (θέαμα); it is rather another mode of seeing, an ecstasy and simplification, an abandonment of oneself, a desire for immediate contact, a stability, a deep intention (πρηνότης) to unite oneself with what is to be seen in the sanctuary. He who seeks to see in any other manner, will find nothing. These are but figures, by

which the wise prophets indicate how we may see this God. But the wise priest, understanding the symbol, may enter the sanctuary and make the vision real. If he has not yet got so far, he at least conceives that what is within the sanctuary is something invisible to mortal eyes, that it is the Source and Principle of all; he knows that it is by the first Principle that we see the first Principle, and unites himself with it and perceives like by like, leaving behind nothing that is Divine, so far as the Soul can reach. And before the vision, the Soul desires that which remains for it to see. But for him who ascended above all things, that which remains to see is that which is before all things. For the nature of the soul will come to evil, and so to not-being, but not to absolute not-being. But if it moves in the opposite direction, it will arrive not at something else, but at itself, and so, being in nothing else, it is only in itself alone; but that which is in itself alone and not in the world of Being is in the Absolute. It ceases to be Being; it is above Being, while in communion with the One. If then a man sees himself become one with the One, he has in himself a likeness of the one, and if he passes out of himself, as an image to its archetype, he has reached the end of his journey. And when he comes down from his vision, he can again awaken the virtue that is in him, and seeing himself fitly adorned in every part he can again mount upward through virtue to Spirit, and through wisdom to the One itself. Such is the life of gods and of godlike and blessed men; a liberation from all earthly bonds, a life that takes no pleasure in earthly things, a flight of the alone to the Alone.’

These extracts will be enough to illustrate the character of the Plotinian mysticism. As a description of a direct psychical experience, it closely resembles the records of the Christian mystics, and indeed of all mystics, whatever their creed, date, or nationality. The mystical trance or ecstasy is a not very uncommon phenomenon, wherever men and women lead the contemplative life. Even when the possibility of literary dependence is excluded, the witness of the mystics is wonderfully unanimous.

The psychology of religious ecstasy has lately been studied with a thoroughness which has nearly exhausted the subject. I do not propose to discuss it here. The influence of the psychological school on the philosophy of religion seems to me to be on the whole mischievous. Psychology treats

mental states as the data of a science. But intuition changes its character completely when treated in this way. This is why a chilling and depressing atmosphere seems to surround the psychology of religion. Many persons are pleased to find that on purely scientific grounds the intuitions of faith and devotion are allowed a place among incontrovertible facts, and treated with sympathetic respect. They do not reflect that the whole method is external; that psychology is a science not of validity but of origins; and that in limiting itself to the investigation of mystical vision as a state of consciousness, it excludes all consideration of the relation which the vision may bear to objective truth. There are some, no doubt, who regard this last question as either meaningless or unanswerable; but such are not likely to trouble themselves about the philosophy of Plotinus. Nor would an examination of pathological symptoms, such as fill the now popular books on 'religious experience,' be of any help towards understanding the passages which I have just quoted. The vision of Plotinus is unusual, but in no sense abnormal. To see God is the goal of the religious life, and the vision of the One is only the highest and deepest kind of prayer, which is the mystical act par excellence. There is nothing strange in the mentality of Plotinus except his intense concentration on the Soul's supreme quest. Those who will live as he lived will see what he saw.

Mr. Cutten rightly says that 'there are two forms of ecstasy. The one is characterised by wild excitement, loss of self-control, and temporary madness. It is a sort of religious intoxication, indulged in largely for its delightful effects. This usually originates in dancing and other physical manifestations. The other type is intense, but quiet and calm; it is usually spontaneous in origin, or else comes through mental rather than physical causes.' The author adds, again very justly, that not only autosuggestion but crowd-contagion plays a large part in the production of religious excitement, while the calm type of ecstasy is experienced in solitude. The latter type, to which, it is needless to say, Plotinus belongs, is also represented by many other scholarly contemplatives, such as the Frenchman, Maine de Biran, who describes its manifestations from his own experience. It is also characteristic of the poets who have drawn spiritual sustenance from the manifestations of comic life in nature. The following reflections may help us to understand

some of the chief features of Plotinian mysticism, and the points in which it differs from other branches of the great mystical tradition.

Plotinus is not content to give us his own experience of the beatific vision, nor does he wish us to experience accept it on his authority. He prefers to appeal to the experience of his readers. He has followed, he says, the guidance of a faculty 'which all have, but few use'; a faculty which, as we shall see, is not anything distinct from the normal operation of the mind, but arises from the concentration of the soul to its 'Father.' He assumes that his readers are made like himself, and that many of them have followed the same path. 'He who has seen it knows what I mean,' is his excuse for not attempting to describe the indescribable. But he does claim to have given us a real metaphysic of mysticism. He has put the vision of One in its right place at the apex of a pyramid as the dialectic guides us, from the many and discordant to the One in whom is no variableness. He explains clearly why thought cannot reach the Absolute. Thought must have a Thing; and Thought and Thing can never be wholly one. This argument we have considered; here I wish to emphasise that the truth which he claims for the vision of the One is absolute, universal, and necessary truth.

The end of the Soul's pilgrimage is the source from which it flowed. As Proclus was afterwards to teach in more precise language, all life consists in a home-stopping, a journey forth, and a return (μονή, πρόοδος, ἐπιστροφή). If the outward journey were considered in isolation, we should have to say that it was not willed, but necessary. If, however, we take the whole course together, as we should do, we may say that Creation was the first act in the drama of Redemption. For the Soul only realises itself in the desire (ἔφσις), the travail-pangs (ὠδίς), which draw it back towards the source of its being.

The process of simplification (ἄπλωσις) by which we approach the One seems at first sight to be a kind of self-denudation—a figure which indeed Plotinus uses. Just as we are forbidden to affirm anything positive about the One, because we cannot affirm anything without excluding its opposite, and nothing must be excluded from the Absolute, so the Soul must strip itself of all that does not belong to the spiritual world, and finally must, for the time at least, shut its eyes to the manifold riches of the spiritual world itself, in order

to enter naked and alone into the Holy of Holies. This 'negative road' (via negativa) is the well-trodden mystic way, and it is the chief stumbling-block of those who dislike mysticism.

Plotinus describes the method in language familiar to all mystics. It consists in removing everything extraneous to the reality which we seek to win and to be. First the body is to be detached as not belonging to the true nature of the Soul; then the Soul which forms body; then sense-perception. What remains is the image of Spirit. When the Soul becomes Spirit by contemplating Spirit as its own principle, the source of all being still remains unexplored. To reach this, 'take away all' (ἀφλ πάντα). The language used makes it clear that this 'abstraction' consists of intense concentration of the mind and will on what are believed to be the essentials of the quest. But the method is based on the conviction that 'all truth is shadow except the last.' All soul-experience half reveals and half conceals reality. So the ascent of the Soul involves a continual rejection of outward shows, and continual self-denial. 'Ideas are always given through something'; but what is behind the Ideas is given through nothing; if it is given at all, it is given in a manner which is too immediate to be described.

The critics have treated the 'negative road' as if it were a mere 'peeling the onion,' a progressive impoverishment of experience until nothing is left. Royce, who is not unsympathetic towards mysticism, condemns it for 'ignoring the sum of the series, and craving only for the final term.' This is not true of Plotinian mysticism, and theoretically it is not true of Catholic mysticism either; though there is a practical danger that the cloistered contemplative may live in dreams and lose touch with the external world. We must remember that for Plotinus reality consists in the rich and glorious life of Spirit, in which whatever we renounce in the world of sense is given back to us transmuted and ennobled. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the Neoplatonist desires to get rid of his Soul. He agrees with the author of the Cloud of Unknowing. 'In all this sorrow he desireth not to unbecome; for that were devil's madness and despite unto God But him listeth right well to be; and he intendeth full heartily thanking to God, for the worthiness and gift of his being, for all that he desire unceasingly to lack the witting and the feeling of

his being.' This last clause does not mean that the ideal state is a sort of somnambulism; we have seen, on the contrary, that Plotinus describes the highest experience as a sort of awaking. A living realisation has taken the place of abstract conceptions. But he does mean that the reference of every experience to a self-conscious psychic self is necessarily an impoverishment of that experience. The less of subjectivity that there is in our experience, the wider and truer it will be. Thus it is not so much the object as the perceiving subject that is constantly re-proved and silenced in the 'negative way' as practised by Plotinus. It is our image of the object which is not good enough to be true. He is no Gnostic, despising this beautiful world; he wants to see it as it really is, and not through the distorting medium of his lower faculties. He knows that the Soul is perpetually constructing a synthesis out of what it has seen and apprehended; it is these premature syntheses which frequently have to be destroyed, or they will detain us in a world of shadows. So the words of Goethe are true:—

'Denn alles muss in nichts zerfallen, Wenn es in Sein beharren will.'

Some critics have been content to find a patent contradiction in the philosophy of Plotinus, which they attribute to a conflict between his personal piety and his speculative thought. 'In Plotinus' philosophy God is exiled from his world and his world from him, whilst Plotinus' experiences and intuitions find God to be the very atmosphere and home of all souls.' To the 'abstractiveness of his method' are traced 'his profoundly unsocial conception of man's relation to God, and of the moments when this relation is at its deepest—alone with the Alone—and the exclusion from the Soul's deepest ultimate life of all multiplicity and discursiveness of thought, and of all distinct acts and productiveness of the will.' These strictures on Neoplatonic ethics will be considered in the next chapter. As for the alleged contradiction between his personal religion and his speculative thought, expect Plotinus is the last writer in whom we should expect to find such an inconsistency; his metaphysics were no intellectual pastime, as Hume's seem in part to have been, but an earnest attempt to think out his deepest conviction justified. The 'exile criticism God from the world' is part of the 'extreme dualism' which Caird supposes in Plotinus, but which, I venture to think, no careful student

of the Enneads will find there. There are certainly two movements—a systole and diastole, in which the life of the Soul consists. Spiritual progress is on one side an expansion, on the other an intensification or concentration. But it is not true that one is the core of Plotinus' philosophy, the other of his religion.

One aspect of the Plotinian mysticism, which must be strongly emphasised, is that there is no occultism in it. There is no 'mystical faculty,' but only the spiritual sense 'which all possess but few use.' There is continuity of development from sense-perception up to the vision of the One. The whole lore of miraculous Divine favours, which fills the records of cloistered mystics, is entirely absent from Plotinus. The psychology of these delusions is still rather obscure; happily they do not concern us here. Suggestion has no doubt much to do with them; sometimes auto-suggestion, sometimes the contagion of a crowd. During some revivals, the patients swoon; in other cases they dance or jerk convulsively. There is, as Mr. Granger well says, a physical hypocrisy as well as a moral one. The best guides in the mystical life warn their disciples against these 'monkey-tricks of the soul,' as the Cloud of Unknowing calls them. Some persons, says this wise and quaint writer, 'turn their bodily wits inwards to their bodies against the course of nature; and strain them, as they would see inwards with their bodily eyes, and hear inwards with their ears, and so forth of all their wits, smelling, tasting, and feeling inwards...and then as fast the devil hath power for to feign some false light or sounds, sweet smells in their noses, wonderful tastes in their mouths, and many quaint heats and burnings in their members.' Eckhart says distinctly that ecstatic auditions are not the voice of God, who 'speaks but one word, in which are contained all truths.' It is the subject of the vision who acts and speaks, and is under an illusion about his own words and acts. In ecstasy the soul feels a new vigour; and as it has before itself no object which it can know, it makes an object of itself and answers itself, and creates what it desires, like the sparks which are seen after a blow on the eye. St. John of the Cross bids us 'fly from such experiences without even examining whether they be good or evil. For inasmuch as they are exterior and in the body, there is the less certainty of their being from God. It is more natural that God should communicate himself through the Spirit than through the sense, wherein there is usually much danger and delusion; because the bodily sense decides

upon and judges spiritual things, thinking them to be what itself feels them to be, when in reality they are as different as body and soul, sensuality and reason.' Plotinus would have distrusted 'bodily showings' for the same reason. When the mind is engaged in contemplating the things of God, strange quasi-sensual delights or pains could be only a distraction, and to provoke or welcome them, and describe them afterwards with luscious recollection, would be folly. To suppose that divine knowledge could be so communicated would contradict his epistemology completely.

This repudiation of occultism does not forbid the perception of analogies in nature—that vision of spiritual law in nature which inspires such poets as Wordsworth, and gives some encouragement to magic. So Sir Thomas Brown says: 'The severe schools shall never laugh me out of the philosophy of Hermes, that this visible world is but a picture of the invisible, wherein, as in a portrait, things are not truly but in equivocal shapes, and as they counterfeit some real substance in that invisible framework.' On the subject of magic, some further reflections will be found in the next chapter.

It will also be noticed that there is not a trace in Plotinus of the 'dark night of the Soul,' the experience of dereliction. This tragic experience has received much attention from modern psychology. Many writers have regarded it as merely pathological, as a violent reaction from nervous overstrain. There is no doubt that the unnatural life led by the contemplative ascetic, cut off from almost every healthy relaxation, must often produce morbid conditions. Intense introspection is sure to cause fits of melancholy; and some mystics, like Madame Guyon, cannot be entirely acquitted of a sort of spiritual self-importance which makes them enjoy retailing their inner joys and miseries. Those who believe, with Miss Underhill, that these sufferings are the privilege of the higher order of mystics, the 'great and strong spirits,' will probably experience, or think they have experienced, some-thing like what they have read of. I think this writer somewhat exaggerates the emotional side of mysticism. But I agree with her that the 'dark night of the Soul' is not to be disposed of as a phenomenon of morbid psychology. As a rule, one may rather distrust the ecstatic who has had no experience of it. As Delacroix says, 'the dark night condenses the whole vision of things into a negative intuition,

as ecstasy into a positive.’ The Christian struggle for spiritual victory is more intense than the Platonic, because the contrasted blackness of evil is felt far more vividly. Plotinus knows of no devil, and no active malignancy in the nature of things. There is no sense of horror in his philosophy from first to last. The temper of the Neoplatonic saint is to be serene and cheerful, confident that the ultimate truth of the world is on his side, and that only ‘earth-born clouds’ can come between him and the sun. It is a manly spirit, which craves for no divine caresses and fears no enmity from ‘the world-rulers of this darkness.’ The Christian may be reminded that the words of the Johannine Christ, ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ reflect the whole tone of Christ's teaching better than the more sombre outlook of many Christian saints. But the dark night of the Soul means repentance and remorse; and are these feelings to be sanctioned or discouraged? For the Jew, the call to repent means ‘Turn,’ not ‘Grieve’; and Spinoza explicitly forbids remorse, as partaking in the cardinal sin of tristitia. ‘One might perhaps expect gnawings of conscience and repentance to help to bring men on the right path, and might thereupon conclude (as everyone does conclude) that these affections are good things. Yet when we look at the matter closely, we shall find that not only are they not good, but on the contrary deleterious and evil passions. For it is manifest that we can always get along better by reason and love of truth than by worry of conscience and remorse. These are harmful and evil, inasmuch as they form a particular kind of sadness; and the disadvantages of sadness I have already proved, and shown that we should strive to keep it from our life. Just so we should endeavour, since uneasiness of conscience and remorse are of this kind of complexion, to flee and shun these states of mind.’ Some of the Christian mystics are here in accord with Spinoza and Plotinus. It was one of the accusations against Molinos that he discouraged contrition. ‘When thou fallest into a fault,’ he says, ‘do not trouble or afflict thyself for it. Faults are effects of our frail nature, stained by original sin. Would not he be a fool who during a tournament, if he had a fall, should he weeping on the ground and afflict himself with discourses upon his misadventure?’ Those who believe in what William James calls the religion of healthy-mindedness will fight against every attack of spiritual misery as if it were a disease. But I cannot disregard the testimony of some of the sanest

and best mystics that it is often 'speedful' for a man to fall into this state of depression. I find, after all, something academic and unreal in those whose visions and thoughts always affirm an optimism. John Pulsford says wisely: 'Satan can convert illumination into a snare; but contrition is beyond his art.' We are meant to feel the strength of the forces that would pull us downward as well as of those which draw us upward; indeed we can hardly know one without the other. 'I strove towards thee,' says St. Augustine, 'and was repulsed by thee that I might taste death. The disturbed and darkened vision of my mind was being healed from day to day by the keen salve of wholesome pains. I became more wretched, and thou nearer.'

The ecstatic state, under whatever names it may be distinguished in its various manifestations, is for the great neoplatonist an exceedingly rare experience; and it is noteworthy that we find no tendency to cheapen it in the later writers of his school. For the mystics of the cloister, on the contrary, it was by no means uncommon; and so far was it from being reserved for the holiest saints in their most exalted moods, that beginners in the ascetic life were warned not to be uplifted by such visitations, which were often granted as an encouragement to young aspirants. Some of the most famous female mystics, especially, were frequently entranced, their ecstasies sometimes lasting for many hours, though half an hour is so often mentioned that it may be regarded as a normal duration of such states. This difference does not seem to be connected with Christianity, which in its pure form gives no encouragement to violent religious emotion. Some of the philosophical Christian mystics, like Eckhart, though they lived in the golden age of monastic Christian mysticism, do not seem to have experienced these abnormal visitations. Others, like Böhme and Blake, certainly were visionaries. Böhme once hypnotised himself by gazing intently on a bright object, a method which, with variations, has been adopted by many Oriental mystics. There is no trace of this self-hypnotisation in Plotinus, though intense abstraction and concentration of thought may doubtless have the same result as protracted gazing upon some chosen object. But Plotinus is careful to insist that the vision must be waited for. 'When the Spirit perceives this Divine light, it knows not whence it comes, from without or from within; when it has ceased to shine, we believe at one moment that it comes from

within and at another that it does not. But it is useless to ask whence it comes; there is no question of place here. It neither approaches us nor withdraws itself; it either manifests itself or remains hidden. We must not then seek it, but wait quietly for its appearance, and prepare ourselves to contemplate it, as the eye watches for the sun rising above the horizon, or out of the sea....The One is everywhere, and nowhere.' The note of personal experience cannot be missed in these words. The fine simile of the watcher in the early morning, his gaze fixed on the eastern sky, recalls the verse of Malachi: 'Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.' But the question has not yet been fully answered, why states of trance are so much more common among the Christian mystics. I believe that a good deal may be attributed to tradition and expectation. Just as young people in some Protestant sects experience 'sudden conversion' at the age of adolescence, while in other Christian churches this is almost unknown or regarded as a rare phenomenon, so visions and trances come often when they are looked for, and seldom when they are not expected. The whole practice and discipline of the cloister involved a greater strain and tension than traditions of Hellenic moral training would have approved. Attempts to induce the mystical state were frequent and mischievous, and warnings against this practice are found in the best spiritual guides of the Middle Ages. For instance, in the little fourteenth-century manual from which I have already quoted, we have a graphic account of the delusions which often assailed the aspirant after mystical experiences, delusions which in those times were naturally set down to the ghostly enemies of mankind.

The mystical state never occurs except as a sequel to intense mental concentration, which the majority of human beings are unable to practise except for a few minutes at a time. Our minds are continually assailed by a crowd of distracting images, which must be resolutely refused an entrance if we are to bring any difficult mental operation to a successful issue. The necessity of this concentration is insisted on by all the mystics, so that it is superfluous to give quotations. Most of them speak of producing an absolute calm in the soul, in order that God may speak to us without interruption. They often tell us that the will must be completely passive, though the stern repression of the imagination which they practise is only possible by a very

exhausting effort of the will. Ecstasy is a fusion of the will and imagination, in which the character of both is changed. In preparing for it all external impressions must be ignored; the contemplative must be impervious to sights and sounds while he is at work. In extreme cases a kind of catalepsy may be produced, from which it is not easy to recover; but this is not a danger to be apprehended by many. The mystical experience is not necessarily associated with meditation on the being and attributes of God. Any concentrated mental activity may, it seems, produce it. Philo, for instance, thus describes what he has felt himself while engaged in philosophical study. 'Sometimes, when I have come to my work empty, I have suddenly become full, ideas being in an invisible manner showered upon me, and implanted in me from on high; so that through the influence of divine inspiration I have become filled with enthusiasm, and have known neither the place in which I was nor those who were present, nor myself, nor what I was saying, nor what I was writing, for then I have been conscious of a richness of interpretation, an enjoyment of light, a most keen-sighted vision, a most distinct view of the objects treated, such as would be given through the eyes from the clearest exhibition.' The philosophical problem which he was debating was almost visualised before his mind's eye, as it is with all philosophical mystics. The Platonist does not contemplate 'a ballet of bloodless categories,' but a rich and beautiful world, in which the imagination clothes spiritual thoughts with half-sensuous forms—a world of inspired poetry and glorious vision.

Wordsworth in a well-known passage describes how the vision comes to a poet's mind.

Sensation, soul and form

*All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hours
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed; he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,*

*His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love.*

Dante, in the Thirty-third Canto of the Paradiso, tells the same story.

*La mia vista, venendo sincera,
e più e più entrava par to raggio
dell' alta luce, che de sè è vera.
Da quinci innanzi it mio veder fu maggio
che il parlar nostro ch' a tal vista cede,
e cede la memoria a tanto oltraggio.
Qual è colui che somniando vede,
chè dopo il sogno la passione impressa
rimane, e l'altro alla mente non riede;
Cotal son io, chè quasi tutta cessa
mia visione, ed ancor mi distilla
nel cor to dolce the nacque de essa...
Così la mente mia, tutta sospensa,
mirava fissa, immobile ed attenta,
e sempre del mirar faceasi accessa.
A quella luce cotal si diventa,
che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
è impossibil the mai si consenta—
Pero che il Ben, ch' è del volere obbietto,
tutto s'accoglie in lei, e fuor di quella
è diffetevo ciò che li' è perfetto.*

Some musicians tell us of a similar experience. Mozart has left it on record that his symphonies came into his mind not phrase by phrase, but as a totum simul, accompanied by a wonderful feeling of exaltation and happiness. 'When and how my ideas come I know not, nor can I force them. Those that please me I retain in my memory and am accustomed, as I have been told, to hum them to myself... All this fires my soul, and provided I am not disturbed my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodised and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I

can survey it like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them as it were all at once. What a delight this is I cannot express. All this inventing, this producing, takes place in a pleasing lively dream. But the actual hearing of the whole together is after all the best. And this is perhaps the best gift I have my divine Master to thank for.' This passage is of great psychological interest, because beauty of sound is essentially dependent on temporal succession. If all the bars of a symphony were played simultaneously, the result would be anything but beautiful. The totum simul of his compositions which floated before Mozart's consciousness and gave him such exquisite delight was the idea of the whole piece, which after being worked out in a succession of sounds, independent of each other as vibrations of the air, but unified by the Soul as expressing a continuous meaning, were visualised as a rich but indissoluble idea by Spirit. This last intuition is not simultaneous but timeless. There are few better illustrations of the psychological truth of the Platonic scheme.

In the medieval mystics the 'darkness' of the vision is more emphasised. They describe a state in which the imagination no longer illuminates even the most spiritual intuitions of the Soul. Angela of Foligo says that at one time she had had clear and distinct visions of God. 'But afterwards I saw Him darkly, and this darkness was the greatest blessing that could be imagined. The soul delighteth unspeakably therein, yet it beholdeth nought which can be related by the tongue or imagined in the heart. It sees nothing, and yet sees all things, because it beholds the Good darkly, and the more darkly and secretly the Good is seen, the more certain is it, and excellent above all things. Even when the Soul sees the divine power, wisdom, and will of God, which I have seen most marvellously at other times, it is all less than this most certain Good; because this is the whole, and those other things only part of the whole.' She goes on to say that though she has had the 'dark' vision of God 'countless times,' yet on three occasions only she has been uplifted to the heights of the vision. 'It seems to me,' she adds, 'that I am fixed in the midst of it and that it draweth me to itself more than anything else which I ever beheld, or any blessing which I ever received, so that there is nothing which can be compared to it.' The rarity of the vision, as well as its character, makes Angela's experience very like that of Plotinus.

It is not necessary, for the purpose of this book, to collect recorded experiences of ecstasies and visionaries. The literature of the subject is already large, and much material which till lately was almost inaccessible is now available for those who wish to study the psychology of mysticism. The common impression about Plotinus, that ecstasy is an important part of his system, is erroneous; it has been thrust into the foreground in the same way in which Western critics of Buddhism have exaggerated the importance of Nirvana in that religion. In both cases the doctrines have also been widely misunderstood. Nirvana does not mean annihilation after death, nor does the philosophy of Plotinus culminate (as Pfeleiderer supposes) in a 'convulsed state' which is the negation of reason and sanity.

The vision of the One is the crowning satisfaction of that love and longing (ἔφσις, Sehnsucht) which, as we have seen, 'makes the world go round' for Plotinus. It is the νοῦς ἐρῶν which sees the vision. But how can anyone love the Absolute? It seems to me that the emotion which the mystics so describe is not a simple one. There is such a thing as a longing for deliverance from individual life itself, a craving for rest and peace in the bosom of the eternal and unchanging, even at the price of a cessation of consciousness. It is not annihilation that the mystic desires—annihilation of anything that truly exists is inconceivable; but the breaking down of the barriers which constitute separate existence. Unchanging life in the timeless All—this is what he desires, and this the vision promises him. But when this is the ground of his yearning for the Absolute, he is not content with a momentary glimpse of the super-existent; he wishes to have done with temporal existence altogether. 'Leave nothing of myself in me,' is his prayer, as it was that of Crawshaw in his invocation of St. Teresa. In this mood he is willing to accept what to many is the self-stultification of mysticism, that the self, in losing its environment, loses also its content, and grasps zero instead of the infinite. All distinct consciousness is the consciousness of a not-self, of externality; and this is just what he hopes to lose for ever. This love for the Absolute seems to be anti-selfish emotion raised to a passion. It can hardly express itself except by negations, or by such symbols as darkness, emptiness, utter stillness. The Godhead is the divine Dark, the infinite Void, ein ewige Stille. But the 'loving Spirit' which has found its bliss and its home in the rich and beautiful world of

the Platonic Ideas has no such longing for 'self-noughting.' It desires only to see the eternal fount from which the river of life flows ever fresh and full. The joy of the vision, to such a one, is the joy of overleaping the last metaphysical barrier, that which prevents subject and object from being wholly one. He knows that beyond the subject-object relation there can be no concrete life or consciousness, and he does not dream of finding a permanent home above the spiritual world. But there is for him no joy comparable to the assurance that he is, in very deed and truth, all the glory that has been revealed to him—that there is 'nothing between.' There is an unfathomable something in his own heart which claims this final consummation of communion as his own; and he returns to the harmonious beauty and order of the spiritual world indescribably enriched by that brief initiation.

There is and must be an element of illusion in the vision of the Godhead. It never remains so formless as the contemplative thinks it to be. The imagination at once constructs a form of formlessness—a shoreless ocean a vast desert, a black night, and the mind which thinks that it contemplates the Absolute really visualises these symbols of the unlimited. But the idea of the One, the Godhead, the ultimate source of all that is good and true and beautiful, is capable of inspiring love, and has inspired love in many noble spirits.

A Christian will press the question asked above (p.) Is this 'intellectual love of God' the crown of love to man, or is it sometimes a substitute for it? What would Plotinus have said to the plain question, 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' I believe that Platonism can answer this challenge better than Indian mysticism, though in practice nothing can be much more beautiful than the gentle and selfless benevolence of the Oriental saint. Love, for Plotinus, passes through a process of purification and enlightenment, like our other affections and faculties. In a sense it becomes depersonalised, more so than many of us would think desirable; but when a Christian teacher bids us to 'love the Christ in our brethren,' when he repeats the famous saying, 'When thou seest thy brother thou seest thy Lord,' he is saying very much what Platonism says in other words. We begin, St. Paul says, by knowing other men 'after the flesh,'

and loving them after the flesh; but we end, or should end, by knowing and loving them as immortal spirits, our fellow-citizens in that heavenly country where, as Plotinus says, the most perfect sympathy and transparent intimacy exist among blessed spirits. And the doctrine of the One as the supreme object of love really secures this—that human spirits in their most exalted moods may share not only a common life and a common happiness, but a common hope and a common prayer.

Nevertheless, we must admit that the whole character of the mysticism of Plotinus is affected by the fact that the ideal object of the quest is a state and not a person. At no point in the ascent is God conceived as a Person over against our own personality. The God whom Plotinus mainly worships—the Spirit—is transcendent as well as immanent in the world of Soul, but purely immanent in his own world, Yonder. In that world He is no longer an object but an atmosphere. The ineffable Godhead above God is of course supra-personal. There is therefore, in the Platonian mysticism, none of that deep personal loyalty, none of that intimate dialogue between soul and soul, none of that passion of love—resembling often too closely in its expression the earthly love of the sexes—which are so prominent in later mystical literature. Compare, as a favourable example of this type, the exquisite Revelations of Julian of Norwich, full of tender reverent affection for the heavenly Christ. We do not feel quite clear what is the object which excites the ardour of the Soul or Spirit in Plotinus. There is an intense desire to see and realise perfection; to be quit of all the contrarities and contradictions of earthly life; to return to the haven where the pangs of home-sickness are no more. These are the chief objects of his desire; and for him and for many they are enough. They were enough for Spinoza, and for Goethe. ‘What specially attracted me in Spinoza’ (Goethe writes) ‘was the boundless disinterestedness which shone forth from every sentence. That marvellous saying, “Whoso loves God must not desire God to love him in return,” with all the premisses on which it rests and the consequences that flow from it, permeated my whole thinking. To be disinterested in everything, and most of all in love and friendship, was my highest desire, my maxim, my constant practice; so that that bold saying of mine at a later date, “If I love thee, what is that to thee?” came directly from my heart.’ Disinterestedness is exactly what this type of philosophy, if it is

erected into a rule of life, can give us; and a very noble gift it is; but there is another road of ascent, by personal affection for man, and even (in many Christian saints) for God or Christ; and those whose temperament leads them by this path are likely to find the mountain-track trodden by Plotinus cold, bleak, and bare. It may even be true that this type of religious philosophy is likely to be specially attractive to those whom circumstances have cut off from domestic happiness and the privilege of friendship, or who are naturally slow to love their kind. In all ages there are some who fancy themselves attracted by God, or by Nature, when they are really only repelled by man. But in dealing with the great mystics such cavils are not only unjust but impertinent. Their loneliness is the loneliness of the great mountain solitudes; the air which we breathe at those heights is thin but pure and bracing; and there is in each one of us a hidden man of the heart who can love and be loved super-individually. This is true of the love of the Christian saint for Christ. St. Paul says that even if we begin by 'knowing Christ after the flesh,' that is a stage which must be left behind. As Bengel says, 'Conversio fit ad Dominum ut Spiritum.' In fact, the difference between Neoplatonic and Christian devotion may easily be exaggerated. The Christian can-not feel for the exalted Christ the same emotion which he would have felt for the Galilean Prophet; his love is worship for a divine Being, the source of all that is lovable, and desire for spiritual communion with the living Power who has 'brought life and immortality to light.' The spiritual love of Plotinus is not very different. It is at any rate true to say that the Christian Platonists of Alexandria, the Cappadocian Fathers, and Greek theology generally, regarded the heavenly Christ as a Being with most of the attributes of the Neoplatonic Noûs .

Ethics, Religion, and Æsthetics

EUCKEN says that it is the special glory of Christianity that its ethics are metaphysical and its metaphysics ethical. But this is equally true of Neoplatonism. The connexion of ethics with metaphysics became closer and closer throughout the history of Greek thought. The first Greek philosophy was generalised natural science; ethical precept at this time was largely handed down in proverbs and aphorisms, as it still is in China. But for Socrates the aim of philosophy was to discover ? 'how a man may spend his life to the best advantage.'; and after him this remained to the end of antiquity the avowed object of metaphysical studies. Aristotle, like Spinoza, was entirely convinced that the search for truth is morally the noblest career that a man can choose. It is, he says, the exercise of that which is highest in our nature, and concerned with the highest things (the being and laws of the universe); it gives the purest enjoyment to those who practise it; and it is, of all modes of life, the least dependent on external conditions.

Stoicism and Epicureanism were both, first and foremost, attitudes towards life; they claimed to regulate conduct in every particular. These two philosophies had the merit of teaching men how to live in this world; later thought inclined to the contemplative and almost monastic ideal of the philosophic life, and made ethics a study rather of how to live out of society than in it. In Plotinus we are conscious of the same want, on the ethical side, which makes itself felt in medieval books of devotion and spiritual guidance. The concrete problems of social morality receive too little attention, and the tone is that of Plato's dictum in the *Laws*, 'Human affairs are not worth taking very seriously; the misfortune is that we have to take them seriously.' It was one of the chief objects of philosophy to teach men not to take them very seriously. It had become the province of the philosopher to administer the consolations of religion to those who were in affliction, or troubled about the health of their souls. In the second and third centuries the philosopher not only claimed to be 'a priest and servant of the gods'; his recognised position was that of spiritual guide, father confessor, private chaplain, and preacher.

For the educated layman, poetry and philosophy were still the great ethical instructors.

Plotinus has not written a book about ethics, like Aristotle. Even on friendship, which takes such a prominent place in classical morals, he has not much to say. He tells us that the political virtues, which precede the stage of purification in which the ascent is begun in earnest, must by all means be practised first, but he touches upon them very lightly. They teach the value of order and measure, and take away false opinions. His biographer tells us that he induced Rogatianus the senator, one of his disciples, to give up the active life of a high official, and betake himself to philosophic con-templation. It is the ideal of the cloister, already victorious over the Stoic ideal of civic virtue. But in Plotinus the world-renouncing tendency is not carried to its extreme lengths. He himself lived, as we have seen, a strenuous and active life, as a valued counsellor of emperors, a beloved teacher and spiritual guide, and a conscientious guardian and trustee. Even the later Neoplatonists who were contemporary with the craze for eremitism among the Christians, insisted that the philosopher must qualify as a good citizen before aspiring to higher flights. In the life of Proclus by Marinus, the biographer includes under the 'political virtues' of his hero, contempt for filthy lucre, generosity, public spirit, wise political counsel, friendship, industry, and all the cardinal virtues. Nevertheless, Plotinus never asks the very important question which Plato (in the Republic) did ask, in a form which shows a very just apprehension of its gravity. 'How can the State handle philosophy so as not to be ruined?' It is the question which for us takes the form, 'How can a State take the Sermon on the Mount for its guide without losing its independence and therewith the opportunity of having an organic life at all?'

Purification (κάθαρσις) is the first stage of the ascent, when the 'political virtues' have been mastered. In most of what he says about this stage, Plotinus has been closely followed by Augustine. To purify the Soul signifies 'to detach it from the body and to elevate it to the spiritual world.' The Soul is to strip off all its own lower nature, as well as to cleanse itself from external stains; what remains when this is done will be 'the image of Spirit.' 'Retire into thyself and examine thyself. If thou dost not yet find beauty there, do like

the sculptor who chisels, planes, polishes, till he has adorned his statue with all the attributes of beauty. So do thou chisel away from thy Soul what is superfluous, straighten that which is crooked, purify and enlighten what is dark, and do not cease working at thy statue, until virtue shines before thine eyes with its divine splendour, and thou seest temperance seated in thy bosom with its holy purity.'

This 'purification' is mainly a matter of constant self-discipline, and especially discipline of the thoughts. Plotinus gives no rules for the ascetic life, and no precepts which point to severe austerities. Outward action for him means so little, except as the necessary expression and 'accompaniment' of inward states, that he could not, without great inconsistency, attach importance to such exercises. He would have us live so simply that our bodily wants are no interruption to our mental and spiritual interests; but beyond this he does not care to go. Platonism, the tendency of which is to make the intellect passionate and the passions cold, has not much need of asceticism of the severer type. The ascetics of antiquity were not the Platonists but the Cynics, whose object was to make themselves wholly independent of externals. Plotinus was, however, the inheritor of an old tradition about self-discipline (ἄσκησις); and it may be interesting to describe briefly what that tradition was.

We need not hunt for traces, in civilised Greece, of the most rudimentary form of asceticism—the abstinence from foods which are supposed to be tabu. This is barbarous superstition, though it may contain other ideas in germ. These other ideas are, speaking generally, two: the consciousness of sin, calling for propitiatory expiation, and the notion that 'the corruptible body presseth down the soul.' As early as the sixth and seventh centuries B.C. Greece had its fasting saints and seers, and abstinence from food before initiation into the mysteries was probably a very ancient custom. The 'Orphic rule' was adopted by communities formed for living the higher life, as early as the sixth century, and was specially popular in Magna Græcia. The disciples of 'Orpheus' were strict vegetarians, counting even eggs forbidden; some vegetables, especially beans, were also condemned; and close contact with birth and death—the mysterious beginning and end of life—was a defilement. This was no mere survival of tabu, nor was it primarily a way of mortifying

the flesh. The Greeks, and the Romans too, were not great flesh-eaters; beef was left to athletes in training. The main reason for abstaining from a meat-diet was the idea that it is a species of cannibalism. The unity of all life was an important part of the mystical tradition, which acknowledges no breaks in the great chain of existence. For this reason Empedocles, according to Aristotle, taught that to kill for food things that have souls is forbidden by that universal law which pervades the whole earth and the firmament above. A vegetarian diet became the rule among philosophers who were influenced by Pythagoreanism, which was an Orphic revival. Porphyry, for instance, was a rigid abstainer from meat.

The other way of asceticism consisted in abstinence from marriage. The cult of celibacy appeared in Christianity as soon as it touched the Hellenistic world; its beginnings can be traced even in the New Testament. Galen and other Pagan writers show that the practice of lifelong continence by the Christians made a great impression on their neighbours; it was considered a proof of such self-control as could be expected only from philosophers. Plotinus was himself an ascetic in this as in other ways. But his attitude towards human love is not the same as that of the Christian ascetics. The cause of sexual love, he says, is the desire of the Soul for the beautiful, and its instinctive feeling of kinship with the beautiful. There are secret sympathies in nature which draw us to what is like ourselves; and just as nature owes its origin to the beautiful in the spiritual world, which makes the Soul desire to create after that pattern, so the human Soul not only loves the beautiful in the visible world, but desires to create it—to 'beget in the beautiful.' Thus there is something laudable in the impulse which leads to sexual desire. But although our love of spiritual beauty inspires the love which we feel for visible objects, these visible objects do not really possess spiritual beauty. And so it is an error to suppose that the longing of the Soul can be satisfied by union with visible objects of love. This error is the cause of carnal desires, from which it is better for the philosopher to abstain. True beauty should be sought in beautiful actions, and in beautiful thoughts. But earthly loves, according to all Platonists, may be the beginning of the ascent to the spiritual world. The lover has at any rate received his call to the philosophic life. This gentle idealism is preferable to the harsh dualism of flesh and spirit, from which

Christian asceticism has not always been free. There is no hint in Plotinus that earthly beauty is a snare of the devil, or that there is something contaminating to the saint in the mere presence of the other sex. We may suspect that when persons hold this view, the reason is, if they are women, that Cupid has left them alone, and, if they are men, that Cupid will not leave them alone. The reason for chastity, in the Platonists, is not that we ought to be ashamed of the natural instincts, but that sensual indulgence impedes the ascent of the Soul from the material to the spiritual world, riveting the chains which bind it to Matter, and preventing it from seeing and contemplating supersensuous beauty. That earthly love in its completest form—the mutual love of husband and wife—may be a sacrament of heavenly love, was a truth hidden from the eyes of Catholic, Gnostic, and Neoplatonic ascetics alike.

One object of asceticism is to 'keep under' the body by diminishing its energy and activities. Suso, for example, asks: 'How can a man gain a perfect understanding of the spiritual life, if he preserves his forces and natural vigour intact? It would indeed be a miracle. I have never seen such a case.' Plotinus would not have assented to this. 'Use your body' (he says) 'as a musician uses his lyre: when it is worn out, you can still sing without accompaniment.' And again, 'the good man will give to the body all that he sees to be useful and possible, though he himself remains a member of another order.' Health, he says, makes us feel more free in the enjoyment of the good; though hardly any bodily ills need seriously impede this. But he does say that some experience of ill-health is better for the spiritual life than a very robust constitution; and this is probably true. There are some people who seem too rudely healthy to be spiritually minded. But deliberate injury to the bodily health is a very different thing. Many of the exercises practised by the mystics of the cloister were admirably designed to produce nervous excitement, hypnotic trance, and exhaustion. These in their turn produced the 'mystical phenomena' which they valued so highly, but which in truth consisted mainly of hallucinations, or of stupor induced by extreme mental and bodily fatigue. There is no trace of this in Plotinus. His attitude is exactly that of Shakespeare's th sonnet:—

*poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
My sinful earth these rebel powers array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
painting thy outward walls so courtly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store:
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
And death once dead, there's no more dying then.*

And yet we cannot wholly approve of Plotinus' attitude towards our humble companion, 'my brother the ass,' as St. Francis calls his body. The philosopher himself is reported to have said that he was ashamed of his body, as a reason for refusing to have his portrait painted. There is nothing in the *Enneads*, on this subject, so whole-some as the following beautiful passage from Krause. 'Spirit and body are in man equally original, equally living, equally divine; they claim to be maintained in the same purity and holiness, and to be equally loved and developed. The spirit of man wishes and requires of his body that it shall helpfully and lovingly co-operate with him in all his spiritual needs, that it shall enlarge his field of view, exercise his art, and unite him through speech with other men; and kindly Nature does not disappoint this expectation, for the spirit is dear and precious to her, and she heaps love and good things upon it. But the body should be just as dear and precious to the spirit. Let the spirit esteem the body like itself, and honour it as an equally great and rich product of the power and love of God. Let it support, help, and delight the body in the organic process of its development to health, power, and beauty. Let it form it into the mirror of a beautiful soul; and let it consecrate and hallow it for the free service of the purposes of reason that are only worthy and good.'

The conflict with evil is regarded by Plotinus rather as a process of emancipation, a journey through darkness into light, than as a struggle with a hostile spiritual power. Human wickedness is never absolute. 'Vice is still human, being mixed with something contrary to itself.' This is akin to the mystical doctrine that even in the worst man there remains a spark of the Divine, which has never consented to evil and can never consent to it. Even Tertullian, it is interesting to find, has the same doctrine. In a fine passage of the *De Anima* he says: 'The corruption of nature is another nature, having its own god and father, the author of corruption. And yet there remains the original good of the soul, which is divine and akin to it and in the true sense natural. For that which is from God is not so much extinguished as obscured. It can be obscured, because it is not God; it cannot be extinguished, because it is from God.... In the worst there is something good, and in the best there is something of the worst.' Plotinus says that the bad man, 'deserting what the Soul ought to contemplate, receives in exchange' for his true self 'another Form,' a spurious self. But this false Form is rather like a coating of mud concealing the real self. 'Hence all virtue is a cleansing' (κῦθαρσις). The doctrine of the 'other Form,' which the bad man gets in consequence of his base desires, may be illustrated from Hylton's Scale of Perfection. 'Now I shall tell thee how thou mayest enter into thyself to see the ground of sin and destroy it as much as thou canst. Draw in thy thoughts. And what shalt thou find? A dark and ill-favoured image of thine own soul, which hath neither light of knowledge nor feeling of love for God. This is the image of sin, which St. Paul calleth a body of sin and death. It is like no bodily thing. It is no real thing, but darkness of conscience and a lack of the love of God and of light. Go as if thou wouldest beat down this dark image, and go through-stitch with it.' The characteristic maxim of Plotinus, 'Never cease working at thy statue,' suggests a scheme of self-improvement more like that of Goethe than the Christian quest of holiness. There is little mention of repentance in our author: he urges us to make the best of a nature which is fundamentally good, though clogged with impediments of various kinds. The Neoplatonist does not make matters easy for himself; but his world is one in which there are no negative values, no temperatures below zero. The last enemy is chaos and disintegration of the Soul, not its reintegration in the service of evil. And if

the higher Soul is the man himself, the man himself never sins. Like Spirit, the higher Soul is ἀναμερτητος. This, however, is not allowed to paralyse the will to virtue; for though the Soul itself is not within the time-process, in which evils occur, the process is within it, and concerns it. Plotinus is valuable also when he says that most vice is caused by 'false opinions' (ψυδῖς δόξαι)—untrue valuations and ignorances of all kinds. Modern philanthropy would be more beneficent if we steadily combated 'false opinions' whenever we met them, instead of assuming that good intentions cover all practical foolishness.

'Flight from the world,' as recommended by Neoplatonism, had the double motive of liberating the Soul from the cares and pleasures of this life, and of making it invulnerable against troubles coming from outside. The latter motive is very prominent in all the later Greek philosophy. The 'flight' mainly consists in renunciation of those things which the natural man regards as goods, and which from their nature, and from the fact that other men covet them, are most liable to be taken away from us. They include also some painful emotions not of a self-regarding nature, such as extreme compassion, which may ruffle the composure of the sage against his will. Only weak eyes, in Seneca's opinion, water at another's misfortunes. 'The end of all philosophy,' says Seneca again, 'is to teach us to despise life.' According to Lucian's *Demonax*, happiness belongs only to the free man, and the free man is he who hopes nothing and fears nothing.' The desire to be invulnerable is natural to most men, and it has been the avowed or unavowed motive of most practical philosophy. To the public eye, the Greek philosopher was a rather fortunate person who could do without a great many things which other people need and have to work for. Those philosophers who most disdainfully rejected pleasure as an end, made freedom from bodily and mental disturbance the test of proficiency and the reward of discipline. On this side, the influence of Stoicism is very strong in all the later Greek thought. Even suicide, the logical corollary of this system (since there are some troubles to which the sage cannot be indifferent), is not wholly condemned by Plotinus, though he has the credit of dissuading Porphyry from taking his own life. The Stoics were well aware that a man has no right to cut himself off from the sorrows of his kind; he must try to relieve them. But he is to preserve an emotional detachment; or perhaps he would say that he wishes to show the

same courage in bearing his neighbour's misfortunes as in bearing his own. We remember La Rochefoucauld and smile. Plotinus certainly errs in not emphasising the necessity of deep and wide human sympathy, for the growth of the Soul. It follows really from his doctrine of Soul, which is in no way individualistic; but he is a little too anxious to make his higher orders of Being comfortable. The good man must enjoy an inner calm and happiness. good and Roman ethics always seem to us moderns a little hard. Greek civilisation was singularly pitiless; the lot of the aged and the unfortunate was acknowledged to be cruel, but this knowledge raised no qualms of conscience. The same pitilessness reappears in the culture of the Italian Renaissance; it may have some obscure connexion with a flowering-time of the arts. Roman hardness was of a different kind, more like the hardness of the militarist clique in Germany; the Stoical philosophy seemed to have been made for Romans. The contrast between the Christian ideal of emancipation from self by perfect sympathy, and the Stoical ideal of emancipation by perfect inner detachment, is very significant. It is perhaps for this reason that the later Platonism could do so little to regenerate society. The philosopher saved himself; his country he could not save. It is fair, however, to add that Plotinus repudiates the suggestion that the good man ought to desire injustice and poverty to exist, as giving a field for his virtues. He may possibly have heard this said by some of his neighbours.

The practical results of extreme moral idealism are shown in the attitude of Plotinus towards national misfortunes. We are a little surprised to find so pious a man refusing to pity the victims of aggression who have trusted in heaven to protect them. 'Those who by evil-doing have become irrational animals and wild beasts drag the ordinary sort with them and do them violence. The victims are better men than their oppressors, but are overcome by their inferiors in so far as they are themselves deficient; for they are not themselves good, and have not prepared themselves for suffering....Some are unarmed, but it is the armed who rule, and it befits not God himself to fight for the unwarlike. The law says that those shall come safely out of war who fight bravely, not those who pray....The wicked rule through lack of courage in the ruled; and this is just.' In the next section he offers something very like a challenge to Christian ethics, and I think he has the Christians in his mind

throughout this discussion. 'That the wicked should expect others to be their saviours at the sacrifice of themselves is not a lawful prayer to make: nor is it to be expected that divine Beings should lay aside their own lives and rule the details of such men's lives, nor that good men, who are living a life that is other and better than human dominion, should devote themselves to the ruling of wicked men.' The philosopher, it seems, will not be much perturbed if his country is successfully attacked by a powerful enemy. If the citizens are enslaved, that does not matter to the Soul; if they are killed, death is only a changing of the actor's mask. If people must take these things seriously, they ought to learn to fight better; God helps those who help themselves. This cool acceptance of monstrous acts of tyranny and injustice does not commend itself to us just now, nor does it seem to accord well with the doctrine that the Soul 'came down' to give order and reason to the outer world.

There is a very instructive parallel in Wordsworth's *Excursion*. A ruined cottage conveyed to his heart

*'So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
The passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream that could not live
Where meditation was.'*

There speaks the Platonist. In later life he altered it to—

*'Appeared an idle dream that could maintain
Nowhere dominion o'er the enlightened spirit,
Whose meditating sympathies repose
Upon the breast of faith.'*

purification (κῦθαρσις) is in one sense a stage through which the soul must pass in order to reach a higher, in another it is a task that can never be completed while We live here. In the former sense, it passes insensibly into the higher stage of Enlightenment. We are often told that Greek philosophy, in

and after Aristotle, spoke of the 'ethical' virtues in connection with the lower stage, and of the 'intellectual' virtues in connection with the higher. These words in their English dress have caused a great deal of misunderstanding. The 'ethical' virtues are not the constituents of all moral excellence; they are those virtues which we begin to practise mainly on authority, and which at last become matters of habit (ἤθος). And the 'intellectual' virtues are not those which require exceptional brain-power—if there are any such virtues; they are for the most part the same as the ethical virtues, only now they are understood and willed with conscious reference to their ultimate ends. The immediate ends are of course willed by the practical moralist; but these are not seen in their relation to universal laws until the stage of enlightenment is reached.

There is a sense in which virtue seems to be dehumanised by entering upon this higher level. Its object of study or contemplation is now what is above man; more especially it occupies itself with the nature of God. Now here we do indeed come to a parting of the ways. Plotinus, like his great predecessors, honestly and heartily believed that the philosophic life is morally the highest. He thought so, not because it happened to be his own trade; he made it his own trade because he thought it the highest. The life of active philanthropy, without reference to anything beyond the promotion of human comfort and the diminution of suffering, would have seemed to him to need further justification, as indeed it does. What is it that we desire most for our fellow-men, and for ourselves; and why? Altruistic Epicureanism would not have appealed to him much more than egoistic; and the not infrequent modern phenomenon of the religious or social worker who, though personally unselfish and self-denying, is a hedonist in his schemes for improving society, would have seemed to him to indicate mental confusion. If happiness is identified with comfort and pleasure, he does not even think it desirable; if with higher states of the mind, we may trust to being happy as soon as we are inside the enchanted garden of the spiritual world. The good life is an end in itself. If any man seeks anything else in the good life, it is not the good life that he is seeking—nor will he find it. But this is not the Stoical pursuit of virtue for its own sake—the rather harsh and bullying ethics of Kantians ancient and modern. Experience has shown that as soon as Stoicism ceases to

be buttressed by pride—an unamiable kind of pride, generally—its ethical sanctions lose their cogency. There are too many unresolved contradictions in Stoicism; its moral centre is in personal dignity, the consciousness of which is not universal, nor indefectible. Some may doubt whether it is altogether desirable. For the Platonist, the only true motive is the desire to ‘become like to God,’ an approximation which, it is needless to say, can take place only in the region of will, love, and knowledge. This, which is the Soul's highest good and the realisation of its true nature, is its own reward; from it proceed, as if automatically, all good actions. But the best life is impossible without the ‘wisdom which is from above’; and this demands a consecration and discipline of the intellect not less than of the will. If the ultimate good is to be something rather than to do something, the philosophic life, in Plotinus’ sense, is the best, and we can understand what Blake meant when he said, ‘The fool shall not enter into heaven, be he never so holy.’

Thus for Plotinus all the virtues are in a sense a preparation for contemplation (θεωρία). The object of contemplation is the Good, which, as we have seen, is one of his names for the Absolute. The chief test whether we are really pursuing the Good is that the Good cannot be desired for any reason outside itself. Heaven is in our Souls or nowhere. If we associate pleasure with the Good as an essential aspect of it, we are not thinking of the Good, but only of our good. There is nothing wrong in this; we must set before us relative and partial goods while we are ourselves imperfect. Thus the good of Matter is Form, the good of the body is the Soul, the good of the Soul is virtue, and above virtue Spirit, the good of Spirit is the One, the ‘first nature.’ In Matter, Form produces order and beauty; in the body, Soul produces life; in the Soul, Spirit produces wisdom, virtue, and happiness; and in Spirit ‘the first light’ produces a Divine light which transforms it, makes it see the God-head, and share the ineffable felicity of the First Principle. Although Plotinus puts the life of Spirit ‘above virtue,’ he is far from any Nietzschean idea of exalting his sage ‘beyond good and evil.’ He insists that it is by virtue that we resemble God, and that ‘without genuine virtue God is but a name. He urges, against the Gnostics, that it is useless to bid men ‘look towards God,’ without telling them how they are to do it. He does not deny the value of the Peripatetic conception of the end as ‘good living’ (ὕξωία), nor of the Stoic advice ‘to

accomplish one's own proper work,' nor even of the Epicurean 'good condition' (ὕπῃθεια). There is truth in all these ideals. The higher life, Spirit, and happiness, are identical—a good not extraneous to ourselves, but one which we already possess potentially. We are 'the activity of the spiritual principle.'

We have said that for Plotinus all the virtues are in a sense a preparation for contemplation (θωρία). The tendency of modern thought in the West is to view this conception of human life with impatience, and to insist that on the contrary all contemplation is useless unless it is a preparation for action. The two ideals are not so far apart as they appear; or rather we should say that a deeper consideration of the problem of conduct tends to bring them together. We must as usual begin with an attempt to understand the exact meaning, not of 'contemplation' and 'action,' but of θωρία and πρᾶξις. Θωρία in the Ionic philosophy meant 'curiosity'; a traveller like Hecataeus or Herodotus might be said to visit foreign lands θωρίας ἔνκα. In the mysteries the word was applied to a dramatic or sacramental spectacle such as the representation of a suffering God. Pythagoras is said to have been the first to give it a new meaning, as the contemplation, not of the sacrament, but of the underlying truths which sacraments symbolise. He found in the observation of the heavenly bodies a potent aid to this kind of contemplation; unlike Plato, who speaks with contempt of star-gazing. Plato in a wellknown passage describes the philosopher as the spectator of all time and existence. In Plotinus the true and perfect contemplation, the 'living contemplation,' is the interplay of Spirit and the spiritual world. But this is no idle self-enjoyment. The quietness (ἡσυχία) of Spirit is unimpeded activity; its being is activity; it acts what it contemplates. Contemplation is activity which transcends the action which it directs. 'If the creative force (λόγος) remains in itself while it creates, it must be contemplation. Action itself must be different from the λόγος which directs it; the λόγος which is associated with action (πρᾶξις) and oversees it, cannot itself be action.' Creation is contemplation; for it is the consummation (ἀποτέλεσμα) of contemplation, which remains contemplation and does nothing else, but creates by virtue of being contemplation. All things that exist are a by-play of contemplation (περργον θωρίας); because though action is the necessary result of contemplation, contemplation does not exist for the

sake of action, but for its own sake. Action is either a weakness of contemplation or its accompaniment, the former if it has no motive or object beyond itself, the latter if it results from some spiritual activity. This seems to me quite sound. Thoughtless and objectless action indicates a weakness of the Soul, which ought to control all our external life. Spinoza would say that contemplation is action inspired by reason, while all other action is 'passive,' reaction to external stimuli. The only proper 'action' is purposive action, in which fortitude, high-mindedness and nobility are displayed. But for Plotinus, contemplation is a rather less intellectual process than for Spinoza. It is an intuition which inevitably leads to appropriate action. I believe that this is truer to experience than is usually supposed. As Mr. Bosanquet says, 'The presence of adequate ideas which are inoperative in moral matters is vastly exaggerated.' Ideas inadequately held, which do not pass into action, are not knowledge. The moral effort (so perhaps Plotinus would have us to believe) is in making our ideas adequate, in passing from dreams to thoughts, in converting visions into tasks, floating ideas into acts of will. When the thing to be done has quite clearly taken possession of our minds, it will be done, he tells us, with a sort of unconsciousness.

That this self-possession which he calls contemplation is difficult to win, Plotinus does not dispute. It requires the use of a faculty which all indeed possess, but which few use. Even so Spinoza concludes his Ethics with a passage which, except for difference of style, might have been written by Plotinus himself. 'The wise man is scarcely at all perturbed in spirit, but being conscious of himself and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit. If the way which I have pointed out as leading to this result seems exceedingly hard, it may nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard, since it is so seldom found. How would it be possible, if salvation were ready to our hand, and could without great labour be found, that it should be by almost all men neglected? But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.' Now this confession of difficulty should be enough to give pause to those who think that the praise of contemplation is a denial of Kingsley's advice to 'do noble things, not dream them, all day long.' For dreaming is very easy work. 'Traümen ist leicht, denken ist schwer.' The clear disciplined thinking which

Plotinus called dialectic is not merely an organon of abstract speculation. It 'gives us reality at the same time as the idea of it.' And the outgoing movement which produces good actions is the natural and necessary activity of contemplation. This doctrine has never been better stated than by Ruysbroek. 'Pure love frees a man from himself and his acts. If we would know this in ourselves, we must yield to the Divine, the innermost sanctuary of ourselves....Hence comes the impulse and urgency towards active righteousness and virtue, for Love cannot be idle. The Spirit of God, moving within the powers of the man, urges them outwards in just and wise activity...Christ was the greatest contemplative that ever lived, yet He was ever at the service of men, and never did His ineffable and perpetual contemplation diminish His activity, or His exterior activity.' Those only need quarrel with the Neoplatonic doctrine of contemplation who do not allow that clear thinking should precede right action.

The Soul when joined to the body is inclined to evil as well as good. The choice must be made. But are we in any sense free agents? We have an impression that we are free; but how do we come by it? We feel that we have a certain liberty, just when our freedom of action is threatened by fate or by violence. Finding with a sort of surprise that in such cases we are forced to act against our real will, we realise the general possibility of resisting external pressure and asserting our freedom. What we call our freedom, then, is simply the power of obeying our true nature. But what is our true nature? Man is a complex being. Free-will certainly does not belong to our desires, or to our passions, or to sensation, or to imagination; these things are too often our masters. We are not completely free agents so long as our desires are prompted by finite needs. And the union of the Soul with the body makes us dependent on the general order of the world, over which we have no control. But though we are complex, we are also, as persons, each of us a whole. It is the chief characteristic of psychical and spiritual life, that the whole is present in each part. We are therefore not merely cogs in a great machine; we are the machine itself, and the mind which directs it. But this is only fully true of the personality which has realised its own inner nature; the man of ordinary experience 'shares in Being and is a kind of Being, but is not master of his own Being.' The imperfect man is pulled and pushed by forces which are

external to himself, just because he is himself still external to his true Being. If we could see the course of events as they really are, we should find that the chain of causation is inviolable, but that 'we ourselves are causative principles.' What is free in us is that spontaneous movement of the Spirit which has no external cause; it is the will of the higher Soul to return to its own Principle. The element of freedom in our practical activities is this underlying motive, the spiritual activity of the Soul. When the Soul becomes Spirit, its will is free; the good will, in attaining its desire, becomes spiritual perception, and Spirit is free in its own right. This resembles Spinoza's definition of freedom: 'We call that free which exists in virtue of the necessities of our nature, and which is determined by ourselves alone.'

Plotinus distinguishes invariable sequence from causation, and points out that rigid determination excludes the very idea of causation. If 'one Soul,' operating through all things, determines every detail, as every leaf of a plant is implicit in its root, this 'exaggerated determinism' (τὸ σφοδρὸν τῆς ἀνάγκης) destroys the very idea of causation and necessary sequence, for 'all will then be one.' We shall then be no longer ourselves, nor will any action be ours; we shall be mere automata, with no will or reasoning faculty. But we must maintain our individuality (δι' ἕκαστον ἕκαστον ?/ναί), and we must not throw the responsibility for our errors upon 'the All.' In another place he says that 'providence is not everything'; otherwise there would be no room for human wisdom, skill, and righteousness; indeed there would be nothing for providence to provide for. The world does not consist only of mechanical sequences; it contains also real causation. Each individual soul is a little 'first cause' (πρωτοργὸς αἰτία); and the universal Soul is above the contradiction of necessity and freedom. 'Necessity and freedom do not contradict each other; necessity includes freedom.'

As for the wicked, their misdeeds proceed necessarily from their character. Our character is our destiny; but our character is also our choice; we must remember that we have lived other lives before our present existence.

It is not correct to say, with Mr. Whittaker, that Plotinus is 'without the least hesitation a determinist.' He is quite convinced that mechanical necessity cannot explain psychical or spiritual life, and in these higher spheres he denies

that necessity and free-will are incompatible. Virtue is not so much free as identical with freedom; it is the unobstructed activity of the higher Soul. But though he endeavours to show the justice of holding men responsible for their actions, and of divine and human punishments, he nowhere clears up the difficulty about the original choice of a character which inevitably produces evil actions. Temptation, he says, is a gradual perversion of a living being which has the power of self-determined movement (κίνησις αὐτξούσιος). The inability to lead the divine and happy life is a moral inability. The necessity is within us. He says in effect that it takes all sorts to make a world, and that we must expect to meet with all degrees of goodness and badness. If we knew all, we might see that badness even conduces to the perfection of the whole.

The conception of Chance (τύχη), in the modern sense, hardly enters into this philosophy. Anaximenes had shrewdly remarked that chance is only our name for the incalculable. Plato in the Tenth Book of the Laws names Nature, Chance, and Art as the three causes of events; but he leaves no room for the operations of chance, except perhaps in the chaos which has not yet received Forms. In Aristotle chance and spontaneity are merely defects (στρήσις); but he also says that events which have an efficient though not a final cause may be said to be due to chance. This gives the word a legitimate use. In any other sense the word should perhaps be excluded from philosophy, which has no room either for uncaused events or for the conception of a whimsical fate. However, the pragmatists seem bent on rehabilitating this discredited deity.

The dispute about free-will is usually a futile quarrel between those who attribute freedom to a man apart from his character, and those who attribute freedom to character apart from the man. Necessity is merely the nature of things; and what we call mechanism is itself a form of the struggle for life. The laws of mechanism are, as Lotze says, 'only the will of the universal Soul,' and it is not surprising that nature, so guided, should have the appearance of an unbroken chain. It is not necessary to hold, with Renouvier, that phenomena are discontinuous, but we do deny that one phenomenon 'causes' another. What we call free will seems to depend on the fact of

consciousness, and the presence of an ideal. In other words, he who asserts free will asserts the reality of final causes.

The general character of the Neoplatonic ethics will be clear from what has been said. The fundamental contrast, for all Greek philosophy and especially for Platonism, is not between egoism and altruism, but between a false and a true standard of values. The Soul, whether from its own choice and love of adventure, or by the will of the higher powers, has exchanged the peace of eternity for the unrest of time, and is or should be engaged on the return journey to its heavenly home. 'Our beginnings must be our ends'; we must strive to realise 'the best part of our nature, that which in the spiritual world we already are.' The great moral danger is that we should forget ourselves and God. 'When the Soul has once tasted the pleasures of self-will, it indulges its opportunities of independence, and is carried so far away from its Principle that it forgets whence it came. Such Souls are like children brought up in a foreign country, who forget who they are and who are their parents. They have learnt to honour everything rather than themselves, to lavish their reverence and affection upon external things, and to break, as far as they can, the links that bound them to the Divine. Believing themselves to be lower than the things of the world, they regard themselves as mean and transitory beings, and the thought of the nature and power of the Deity is driven out of their minds.' This self-contempt, which is the cause why so many are content to lead unworthy and useless lives, isolates us also from our fellows, whom we respect no more than we respect ourselves. A kind of moral atomism becomes our philosophy. We lose all sense of human solidarity, and become like faces turned away from each other, though they are attached to one head. If one of us could turn round, he would see at once God, himself, and the world. And he would soon find that the separate self is a figment; there is no dividing-line between himself and the world. The 'external' world is that part of the higher self of which he has not yet been able to take possession. 'All Souls are all things; each of them is characterised by the faculty which it chiefly uses; some unite themselves to the spiritual world, others to the discursive reason, others to desire. Souls, while they contemplate diverse objects, are and become that which they contemplate.' The ascent cannot be made all at once; the lower stages are rungs to climb by. The end is

unification; 'goodness is unification and unification is goodness.' Sympathy is thus based on the recognition of an actual fact, our membership one of another. Philosophy reveals this relationship, just as science reveals our physical kinships and affinities. But this membership is in truth not of the physical or psychical but of the spiritual order. Neoplatonic morality thus remains throughout theocentric. Souls are members of a choir which sing in time and tune so long as they look at their conductor, but go wrong when their attention is diverted to other things. Philanthropy, therefore, is not the end of true morality, but its necessary consequence. It is natural to love our neighbours as ourselves, when once we have understood that in God our neighbours are ourselves. The higher part of the self, including our 'reason' (τὸ λογικόν) is not divided among individuals; sympathy, then, is the natural result of a real identity.

The highest stage hardly belongs to ethics: it is dealt with in the preceding chapter. But the noble doctrine that 'there is progress even in heaven' must be again quoted in this connexion. Plotinus is as emphatic as the New Testament that we must put on the new man; though this is otherwise expressed by saying that 'we see ourselves as Spirit.' Love becomes more and more important as we ascend further. Love is 'an activity of the Soul desiring the Good.' Plotinus follows Plato in using mythical language about Love, There are different 'Loves'—dæmonic Spirits—belonging to different grades in the hierarchy of existence. The Universal soul has a Love 'which is its eye, and is born of the desire which it has' for the One. There is a still higher Love which is wholly detached from material things. Love is not a relation between externals, but between Spirit and Spirit. It is unity in duality, the reconciliation of these opposites, known in experience. Human Love is the sacrament of the union of Souls Yonder. It is immortal; almost immortality itself. We need not be surprised that the Neoplatonists use ἔρωζ where the Christians used ἀγάπη. For Plato and all his followers the love of physical beauty is a legitimate first stage in the ascent to the love of the divine Ideas. Plotinus says that three classes of men have their feet on the ladder— the philosopher, the friend of the Muses, and the lover. The intellect, æsthetic sensibility, and love are the three 'anagogic' faculties. He knows that they are apt to how over into each other.

It remains to notice that Plotinus attaches importance to a calm cheerfulness of temper. 'The good man is always serene, calm, and satisfied; if he is really a good man, none of the things which are called evils can move him.' Here again we see the influence of the Stoics.

The defects of Plotinian ethics are in part common to the school, and in part common to the age. The following passage, true in the main, is marred by its last sentences. 'Men complain of poverty and of the unequal distribution of wealth, in ignorance that the wise man does not desire equality in such things, nor thinks that the rich has any advantage over the poor, or the prince over the subject. He leaves these opinions to the vulgar, and knows that there are two sorts of life, that of virtuous people, who can rise to the highest degree of life, that of the spiritual world; and that of vulgar and earthly persons, which is itself double; for sometimes they dream of virtue and participate in it to some small extent, and sometimes they form only a vile crowd, and are only machines, destined to minister to the first needs of virtuous men.' Plotinus here uses the haughty tone of an intellectual aristocrat, and assumes without hesitation that the thinker has a right not only to his leisure, but to be supported by the labour of those who cannot share his virtues. But we must remember that a Neoplatonic saint would live so as to be a very light burden on the community, and that it is well worth while for a State to encourage a few persons to devote themselves to such a life as Plotinus lived. The only error (if it is made) is in supposing that humble occupations are a bar to the highest life. The notion that the dignity of work is determined by the subjects with which it is concerned, and not by the manner in which it is executed, is a mischievous error which Greek thought never outgrew, and which still survives in the learned professions. The effects of it were far-reaching, and had not a little to do with the decay of Greek culture. Early Christianity was, in principle at least, free from this fault, but it was, on the whole, blind to the joy of productive activity, which Plotinus recognises in his doctrine of the Soul as creator, and to the value of industry in secular things as a service of God, a side of ethics which was not developed till the Reformation. There is a beautiful passage of Lotze which is entirely in accordance with the principles of Neoplatonism, and which Plotinus might have uttered if he had lived in a happier period than the third century. 'As in the great fabric of the universe

the creative Spirit imposed upon itself unchangeable laws by which it moves the world of phenomena, diffusing the fullness of the highest good throughout innumerable forms and events, and distilling it again from them into the bliss of consciousness and enjoyment; so must man, acknowledging the same laws, develop given existence into a knowledge of its value, and the value of his ideals into a series of external forms proceeding from himself. To this labour we are called; and the most prominent intellects in all ages have devoted them-selves to the perfecting of the outward relations of life, the subjugation of nature, the advancement of the useful arts, the improvement of social institutions, though they knew that the true bliss of existence lies in those quiet moments of solitary communion with God when all human daily toil, all culture and civilisation, the gravity and the burden of noisy life, shrink into a mere preliminary exercise of powers.'

Another defect is the moral isolation of the Neoplatonic saint. In the most typical Christian contemplatives we find that sorrow for the sins of others, and pity for the world, often fill their hearts. Take as an example the short record of Margaret Kempe, an obscure precursor of Julian of Norwich. 'If she saw a man had a wound, or a beast; or if a man beat a child before her, or smote a horse or another beast with a whip, she thought she saw our Lord beaten or wounded. If she saw any creature being punished or sharply chastised, she would weep for her own sin and compassion of that creature.' So Thomas Traherne exclaims: 'Christ, I see thy crown of thorns in every eye, thy bleeding, naked, wounded body in every soul; thy death liveth in every memory; thy crucified Person is embalmed in every affection; thy pierced feet are bathed in everyone's tears; and it is my privilege to enter with thee into every soul.' The ideas of corporate penitence and atoning sympathy are not to be found in Plotinus. He does not seem to realise that 'apathy,' which implies an external attitude towards sin, sorrow, and failure, closes one of the chief lines of communication by which the Soul may pass out of its isolation and identify itself with a larger life. A modern writer would add that it is a fatal bar to understanding and solving any social or moral problem. The call to seek and save that which was lost, the moral knight-errantry which 'rides abroad redressing human wrongs,' the settled purpose to confront 'the world'—that is to say, human society as it organises itself apart from God, a

network of co-operative guilt with limited liability, with another association of active 'fellow-workers with God'—this call is but faintly heard by philosophers of this type, and they leave such work to others.

The dependence of Souls on each other for the achievement of their perfection is a truth which Christianity taught and Neoplatonism neglected. 'In every individual spirit,' says Krause, 'particular faculties predominate for the glorification of the whole, and all other faculties are then found in diminishing strength and capacity as they are removed from those which are the ruling elements in its individuality. The individual spirit can only attain perfection through free social intercourse on all sides with the spiritual world. What it cannot bring forth by its own activity it receives spontaneously from others, who communicate it out of the fullness of their own being. This ever new stimulus and nourishment of the proper life of the spirit, and the potential universality of all spiritual formation, thus lie in the social intercourse of spirits with each other.' Christianity promises to make men free; it never promises to make them independent. The self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκεια*) of St. Paul is an independence in relation to external conditions, but not in the same degree in relation to his fellow-men. We need each other; and therefore we can never be quite so invulnerable as ancient philosophy hoped to make us. Human solidarity is a guarantee of pure freedom in the eternal world; in the world of soul-making it is a bond of union, but still a bond. Therefore we must both give and take, without grudging and without pride; we must find our complement in others, and in our turn must help to bear their burdens. Even Buddhism learned this truth better than Neoplatonism. Buddha himself said that he would not enter Nirvana till he could bring all others with him. The sense of organic unity with our fellows ought to make it intolerable for us to reach the One alone. Perhaps it is even impossible to do so.

But we must not end this section with words of censure. Plotinus himself was lovable and beloved, and he could not have used his great gifts to better advantage for posterity. The under-valuation of human sin and suffering which comes from an intense preoccupation with the eternal world is not a common defect, and it is a defect which is not far from heroic virtue. It is only

in a lower type of mystics that it is dangerous—in that class of aspirants to heavenly wisdom who make the tragic mistake of imagining that they are what they only dream about, and who in consequence miss that creative activity in the outer world without which the Soul cannot gain its freedom or perform its task.

Religion

The philosophy of Plotinus is a religious philosophy throughout, because for him reality is the truly existing realisation of the ideal. Bosanquet's words are eminently true of Plotinus. 'In so far as the religious experience comes to include the vision of all that has value, united in a type of perfection, metaphysic comes to be little more than the theoretical interpretation of it alone.' There is no separation between the speculative and ethical sides of his system. If it is true that all practice leads up to contemplation, it is equally true that contemplation is itself the highest kind of action, and necessarily expresses itself in moral conduct. But for him the practice of the presence of God, in which religion consists, is very loosely connected with the myths and cultus of the popular faith. Plotinus himself felt no need of these aids to piety. He even surprised his disciples by his indifference to public worship, and almost shocked them by the answer he gave to one who questioned him on the subject. 'It is for the gods,' he said, 'to come to me, not for me to go to them.' Like most mystics, he saw no reason for 'esteeming one day above another,' and one place above another. And it was part of his faith that the Soul must prepare itself for a divine visitation, but not demand it or try to force it. The words, 'I will hearken what the Lord God shall say concerning me,' express his attitude in devotion. In this neglect of the externals of religion he differed from his greatest successor, Proclus, who was initiated into nearly all the mysteries, and spent much of his time in devotional exercises; but he was in agreement with the mystical tradition. In the Hermetic writings, the whole duty of man is declared to be 'to know God and injure no man'; and the only religious practice (θηρησκία) which belongs to true religion is 'not to be a bad man.' As for the myths, the Neoplatonic doctrine is thought out wholly on the line of the philosophical tradition; the

myths are completely plastic in the hands of the allegorising metaphysician. His treatment of the gods is rather like Hegel's treatment of the Christian Trinity. The older philosophers sometimes looked upon the popular religion as a rival or an obstacle; Plotinus twists it about in the most arbitrary manner to serve as an allegorical presentment of his system. His real gods were not Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, but the One, Spirit, and the Soul of the World. These are often said to be the Neoplatonic Trinity; and though the suggested parallel with Christian theology is misleading, it is true that Plotinus explicitly deifies these three principles. The One, as has been said, is much the same as the Godhead of Eckhart and other mystics. Of Spirit he says, 'We have then to conceive of one nature—Spirit, all that truly exists, and Truth. If so, it is a great God. Yes, this nature is God—a second God.' (The triad in this sentence is equivalent to = —νοητὰ—νόησις) And elsewhere he gives us in an ascending scale 'the best men, good dæmons, the gods who dwell on earth and who contemplate the spiritual world, and above all the ruler of the whole universe, the all-blessed Soul; thence we should sing the praise of the gods of the spiritual world, and over all the great king of that world'—i.e. Νοῦς.

Nevertheless Plotinus leaves room for the gods of the popular worship. Like Aristotle, he holds that the universe contains beings more divine than man—'dæmons,' and 'gods' who are dæmons of a superior order. But he calls in his theory about the compenetration of all spiritual substances to fuse his 'gods' into one God, who none the less 'remains multiple.' The following passage is instructive: 'Suppose that the world, remaining in all its parts what it is and not confounded, is conceived of in our thought as a whole, as far as possible....Imagine a transparent sphere placed outside the spectator, in which one can see all that it contains, first the sun and the other stars, then the sea, the land, and all living creatures. When you thus represent in thought a transparent sphere containing all things that are in movement or repose, or sometimes one and sometimes the other, keep the form of the sphere, but suppress the ideas of mass and extension, and banish all notions derived from Matter. Then invoke the God who made the world of which you have formed an image, and implore him to descend. Let him come bringing his own world with him, with all gods that are in it, he being one and all, and each of them being all, coming together into one; and being distinguished in their powers,

but all one in their single great power; or rather the one [God] is all [the gods]. For he suffers no diminution by the birth of all the gods who are in him. All exist together, and if each is distinct from the others, they have no local separation, nor any sensible form.... This [the sphere of the Divine] is universal power, extending to infinity, and infinite in its powers; and so great is he that his parts are also infinite'

Plato had maintained strongly that religion must be mythological in its earlier stages. Education must begin with what is untrue in form, though it may represent the truth as nearly as possible, under inadequate symbols. He lays down certain standards (τύποι θολογίας) whereby we may distinguish 'true' myths from false. God is good and the cause only of good; He is true and incapable of change or deceit. 'True myths' ascribe these qualities to God; false myths contradict them. So Plato does not disapprove of the 'medicinal lie,' which has been used to justify all religious obscurantism. But he would banish all who try to misrepresent the character of God and the moral law in the interest of a priestly caste or a corporation.

Aristotle, who entirely rejects the ideas of communion with God and of anything like a covenant between God and man, holds that 'the rest of the tradition [about the gods] has been added later in mythical form with a view to persuasion of the multitude, and to its legal and utilitarian expediency.' He attributes no scientific or philosophical value to mythology. Nevertheless he is anxious to show that popular theology and the worship of the sun and stars have some value and justification. Hence perhaps his curious theory of concentric circles, which is puzzling to his readers, who cannot be sure how far it is meant to be taken literally. Plotinus and Dante have both borrowed from him here; and in both the same difficulty is felt.

It is interesting that Origen finds it possible to pour scorn on the philosophers who, though they boast of their knowledge of God and Divine things obtained from philosophy, yet run after images and temples and famous mysteries; whereas the Christian knows that the whole universe is God's temple, and can pray as well in one Place as another, shutting the eyes of sense and raising upwards the eyes of the soul. 'Passing in thought beyond the heavens, he offers his prayers to God.' It is plain that neither Origen nor

Plotinus would have seen anything but nonsense in Herrmann's dictum that 'mysticism is Catholic (as opposed to Protestant) piety.' Iamblichus and Proclus might have admitted a partial truth in it.

'The gods of the spiritual world are all one, or rather one is all.' A second class of divine beings are the sun and stars. This world is 'the third god.' The earth is conscious and can hear our prayers, though not as we hear sounds; and the same is true of the stars. But all their motions are determined by 'natural necessity' not by thought. The influence which, in his opinion, the heavenly bodies have on human affairs is not the result of caprice or predilection, nor can it be deflected by any sorceries; it is part of the chain of sympathies which runs through all nature. Prophecy is thus rationalised as scientific prevision, based on the study of analogy. The vulgar astrology, then so widely practised, receives no countenance from Plotinus. The stars may indicate coming events; they cannot cause them. But he is even more indignant with the Gnostics (and no doubt also with the orthodox Christians), for denying the divinity of the sun and stars, which seem to him far higher in the scale than human beings.

The dæmons, or lower order of Divine beings, are confined to those spheres of existence which are below the spiritual world. If the ideal Dæmon (ὁ αὐτοδαίμων) is in the spiritual world, we had better call him a god. 'The nature of the universe is a mixture, and if we separate from it the separable soul, what is left is not great. If we include the separable soul, the nature of the universe is a god; if we omit this, it is, as Plato says, a great dæmon, and its affections are dæmonic.' The dæmons then are powers proceeding from the Soul as a dweller on the earth; their power is confined to the region 'below the moon.' They are everlasting (ἄφθιοι), and can behold the spiritual world above them; but they have bodies of 'spiritual Matter,' and can clothe themselves in fiery or airy integuments; they can feel and remember, and hear petitions.

If this rather crude spiritism appears unworthy of Plotinus, we have to remember that he inherited a long tradition on the subject, which he could hardly cast aside. The belief in dæmons carries us back to the primitive animism which preceded the Olympian mythology. Almost all the philosophers dealt tenderly with this deeply-rooted faith. The Pythagoreans

especially cherished the belief; they regarded the dæmons as representing the Souls of the dead. The air is full of them; they are often visible; and they send dreams and warnings to men, nay, even to animals. They are a kind of guardian-angels while we live, and flit about like ghosts when we are dead. When Heracleitus said that 'each man's character is his dæmon,' he meant that our fate is determined by our inner qualities, and not by any external power. There are bad demons as well as good; these are the disembodied Souls of wicked men. Socrates, as is well known, believed that he heard a warning voice from time to time, restraining him from doing what he was about to do, and this was called 'the dæmon of Socrates.' Plato, speaking mythically, makes the dæmons the sons of gods by nymphs or some other mothers. Every man has a dæmon who attends him during life and after death, watching over his charge like a shepherd. The dæmon is the intermediary between gods and men; he carries our prayers to the gods, and transmits to us the wishes of Heaven. Love is 'a great dæmon.' In the *Timæus*, however, he seems to identify the dæmon in each man with his higher Soul. The Stoics firmly believed in dæmons, who in our life-time share our good and evil fortune, and after our death float about the lower air. Each man's Soul may be called the dæmon born with him. Plutarch says that the Souls of good men, 'when set free from rebirth and at rest from the body,' may become dæmons.

Under the Empire, there was a fusion between the Greek 'dæmon' and the Roman 'genius,' which also hovered on the borderland of divinity. Tibullus writes:—

'At tu, Natalis (=Genius), quoniam deus omnia sentis, Adnue; quid refert clamne palamne roget?'

In a more familiar passage, Horace describes the genius as

*'Natale comes qui temperat astrum,
Naturae deus humanae, mortalis in unum
Quodque caput.'*

So Apuleius says that the genius is 'is deus qui est animus suus cuique, quamquam sit immortalis, tamen quodam modo cum homine gignitur.' But

the Romans paid honour also to the 'genius' of an institution, such as a legion, or even a permanent tax. I do not think that the Greek dæmon was ever placed in charge of an institution. On the other hand, the belief in evil dæmons grew; Plutarch tries to explain moral temptation in this way. 'A typical utterance, from this point of view, is that which was attributed to Charondas in the spurious proems of his Laws: "If a man is tempted by an evil spirit, he should pray in the temples that the evil spirit may be averted."' There is nothing of this kind in Plotinus, who is far less inclined to moral dualism than Plutarch. The whole belief in intermediate beings is part of the current religion of the time, and has no inner connexion with the philosophy which we are considering.

The kindred subject of magic and sorcery is dealt with in a curious manner by Plotinus. The spiritual man is above all such dangers, for his conversation is in heaven, where no evil influences can penetrate. He who contemplates the eternal verities is one with the object of his contemplation; and no one can be bewitched by himself. The higher soul is also exempt. It is only the irrational soul, which, by allowing itself to be entangled among the temptations of covetousness, self-indulgence, ambition, or fear, becomes liable to injuries from magical arts. Magic can influence our external activities; for example, it can cause diseases, and even death. This power belongs to the law of sympathies which runs through nature; the dæmons have power within their own sphere, which extends to the 'irrational' part of nature. Porphyry, however, tells us that when a certain Olympius, from Alexandria, tried to bewitch Plotinus, his sorceries recoiled from his own pate, and after suffering excruciating pains he was obliged to desist! In the same section of his biography Porphyry says that an Egyptian priest, wishing to give proof of his powers during a visit to Rome, begged Plotinus to come and see him evoke the dæmon of Plotinus himself. Instead of the dæmon there appeared a god, which caused the enchanter to congratulate Plotinus on having a being of the higher rank to watch over him. It is not likely that the philosopher was himself the authority for this story, any more than that Iamblichus encouraged the belief that he floated in the air when he said his prayers. It was a superstitious and unscientific age; and Neoplatonism was not well

protected on this side. Indeed, by admitting the reality of witchcraft, it helped to elevate superstition into a dogma.

Prayer, in the wider sense of any 'elevation of the mind towards God,' was of course the very life of religion for the Neoplatonists. But the efficacy of petitionary prayer was a problem for them, both because of their belief in the regularity of natural law, and because it was not easy for them to admit that the higher principle can be affected in any way by influences from beneath. Plotinus would have us approach the higher spiritual powers by contemplation and meditation, without proffering any requests; it is the lower spirits that are amenable to petitions this kind of prayer being in fact a branch of sympathetic magic. All the attractions and repulsions that pervade nature are for him a kind of magic (γοητία or μαγία); 'the true magic is the friendship and strife that exist in the great All.' Love, with all its far-reaching influence in the world, is the first wizard and enchanter. Only contemplation is above enchantments (ἀγοήτντος). Magic in this sense is only an empirical knowledge of the subtle laws of attraction in nature; prayer works no miracles, but only sets in motion obscure natural forces. But Plotinus attaches small value to this kind of praying. The only prayers that seem to him worthy of the name are the unspoken yearnings of the Soul for a closer walk with God. Of this 'prayer of quiet' he speaks finely in . . . The desire which all creatures feel to rise towards the source of their being is itself prayer; so that Proclus can say, in a striking sentence, that 'all things pray, except the Supreme (the One).' The Oriental mystic Kabir expresses the same thought. 'Waving its row of lamps the universe sings in worship day and night. There the sound of the unseen bells is heard; there the Lord of all sitteth on his throne.' It is plain that Plotinus would have entirely agreed with George Meredith's words: 'He who rises from his knees a better man, his prayer has been granted.' The whole object of prayer is to become one with the Being to whom prayer is addressed, and so to win the blessed life. 'Even here below a wise life is the most truly grand and beautiful thing. And yet here we see but dimly; yonder the vision is clear. For it gives to the seer the faculty of seeing, and the power for the higher life, the power by living more intensely to see better and to become what he sees.'

So the whole of religion is summed up in the vision of God. It is the experimental verification of the act of faith in which religion begins, by virtue of 'the consciousness inherent in the finite-infinite being, so far as his full nature affirms itself, that he is one with something which cannot be shaken or destroyed, and the value of which is the source and standard of values.' This is the substance of the Neoplatonist's creed. What Mr. Bosanquet calls the finite-infinite nature of the finite spirit is a truth revealed to our consciousness with increasing clearness as we advance morally and intellectually. Plotinus repeatedly appeals to the religious experience of his readers; he knows that he cannot carry us with him further than we have the power to see for ourselves. For it is as the greater Self that we come to know God, not as a separate anthropomorphic Being over against ourselves. Our struggle to reach Him is at the same time a struggle for self-liberation. We lose our Soul in order to find it again in God. There is no barrier between the human and divine natures. The human Soul has only to strip itself of those outer integuments which are no part of its true nature, in order to expand freely by means of the 'organic filaments' which unite it with all spiritual being. This expansion is at the same time an intensifying of life, an 'awakening' from the dream of sensuous existence. Our environment, which we make while it makes us, changes all the time. Our perception becomes spiritual intuition; the air we breathe becomes the atmosphere of eternity, not of time. The problem of immortality is changed for us in such a way that it ceases to be a vague and chimerical hope and becomes an experience—*sentimus et experimur nos aeternos esse*, as Spinoza says. The question of the survival in time of the empirical ego loses its interest, since the empirical ego is no longer the centre, much less the circumference, of our thoughts. The Soul that never dies is not something that belongs to us, but something to which we belong. We shall belong to it after we are dead, as we belonged to it before we were born. Its history is our history, and its super-historical existence is our immortality. The life of this great Soul to which we belong has two aspects—contemplation and creation. Its gaze is turned steadily upon the eternal archetypes of all that is good and true and beautiful in the universe. It adores God under these three attributes, by which He is known to man. The inner religious life consists of continual acts of recollection, when we 'turn away our eyes lest they behold

vanity,' and resolutely try to realise the glories of the unseen world which encompasses us. The other activity of the Soul, creation of good, true, and beautiful things and actions in the world of space and time, follows so naturally and necessarily from a right direction of the thought and will and affections, that it is not worth while to bring forward other motives for leading an active and useful life. The true contemplative cannot be selfish or indolent. He makes the world better, both consciously and unconsciously, by the very fact that his conversation is in heaven. It is other-worldliness that alone can transform the world.

If any man is disposed to take Plotinus as his guide, not only in search for truth, but in the life of devotion, he will naturally ask to what Being his prayers should be addressed, and his acts of worship offered. We have seen that the sphere of the Divine (τὰ Θεία) includes not only the One, but Spirit and the Universal Soul. In spite of the unity which forbids any notion of separate existence in the eternal world, there are distinctions between the three Divine Hypostases which make the question legitimate and inevitable. I have already suggested that when our thoughts are turned towards anything that we hope for in space and time, we shall most naturally address ourselves to the Universal Soul, which upholds the course of this world and directs it, and seems to be itself engaged in the great conflict between good and evil. When we are praying for spiritual progress and a clearer knowledge of God, or when we are longing for the bliss of heaven and the rest that remaineth for the people of God, it is to the Great Spirit, the King, as Plotinus calls him, that we shall turn. Lastly, if ever we are rapt into ecstasy, and pass a few minutes in the mystical trance, we shall hope that we are holding communion with the One—the Godhead who 'dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto.' No stress need be laid, for purposes of devotion, on the Neoplatonic doctrine of the three Divine hypostases. But it seems to me that we do in fact envisage God under these three aspects in our prayers and meditations, and that without much violence we might even classify theologians and religious thinkers under these three heads. Some would have us worship the Soul of humanity, or the Soul of the world; others the Lord of the eternal and spiritual realm; others the ineffable Godhead. It is one of the strong points of

Plotinus that he finds room for all three, and shows how we may pass from one mode of worship to another.

A brief comparison between Neoplatonism and Christianity is necessary for an understanding of the former, though this book is not written as a contribution to Christian apologetics. I will first summarise the opinions of Rudolf Eucken, in his valuable book entitled *Lebensanschauungen Grosse Denker*. 'That which unites Plotinus with Hellenism must separate him from Christianity. In criticising the Christian Gnostics, he blames them first for overvaluing humanity. For him mankind is a mere part of the world, the whole of which is penetrated by the Divine power. He blames them for despising and despiritualising the world, which contains spiritual beings far higher than the common run of men. He blames them for unpractical activity. Those who are too proud to fight must acquiesce in the victory of the bad cause. Whether these criticisms apply to Christendom as well as to the Gnostics, we need not here discuss; in any case Plotinus follows the Hellenic tradition in asserting the co-ordination of humanity with the All, the soul-life and even the deification of natural forces, the expectation of happiness from active conduct, the high estimation of thought and knowledge as the Divine spark in man. Plotinus is really further removed from Christianity than these statements express, but he is also more akin to it than the collision between the two allows to appear. In both we find an uncompromising inwardness and a drawing of all life towards God, and in both rather by a renunciation of the world than by co-operation with it. But Plotinus finds this inwardness in an impersonal spirituality, Christianity in a development of the personal life. In the former all salvation comes from the power of thought, in the latter from sincerity of heart. Such a fundamental difference implies a different answer to the most important problems of life. In Plotinus we find an abandonment of the first world, a fading of time in the light of eternity, a repose in view of the Whole. In Christianity we find an entrance of the eternal into time, a world-historical movement, a power working against the irrationality of the actual. In the former we have a disappearance of man before the endlessness of the All; in the latter, a transposition of man and humanity into the central point of the All. In the former, an isolation of the thinker on the heights of contemplation of the world; in the latter a close welding together of

individuals in full community of life and sorrow.' He ends by finding a contradiction in Neoplatonism between the doctrine of inwardness and the fundamental impersonality of the world of which man is a part.

Baron von Hügel also finds a radical inconsistency between Plotinus the metaphysician and Plotinus the saint, a criticism which has often been made in the case of Spinoza. I have already quoted (p.) the words in which the Baron brings the charge: that 'in Plotinus' philosophy God is exiled from his world and his world from him,' while at the same time he attaches special value to his 'constant, vivid sense of the spaceless, timeless character of God; of God's distinct reality and otherness, and yet of his immense nearness; of the real contact between the real God and the real soul, and of the precedence and excess of this contact before and beyond all theories concerning this, the actual ultimate cause of the soul's life and healing. Indeed, reality of all kinds here rightly appears as ever exceeding our intuition of it, and our intuitions as ever exceeding our discursive reasonings and analyses.'

There is much in these estimates that deserves respectful attention. Eucken's enumeration of differences is very illuminating. But in my judgment this writer overstates the intellectualism of Plotinus, while Baron von Hügel follows too closely those French critics (such as Vacherot), who regard the method of abstraction—of 'peeling the onion'—as the characteristic instrument of plotinian dialectic. As I have insisted more than once in this book, we cannot understand Plotinus unless we realise that the spiritual world, with its fullness of rich content, is for him the real world, and the ultimate home of the Soul. This is quite consistently the conclusion of the dialectic, and I can see no contradiction between the philosophy and the religion of Neoplatonism. Nor does it seem to me that these two sides of the Plotinian teaching have shown any tendency to fall apart in his disciples. The whole system is still coherent, as he left it, a strong argument that it is not vitiated by inner contradictions.

The criticism of Augustine remains, in my opinion, the most profound that has proceeded from any Christian thinker. We have to remember that Augustine was converted to Platonism before he was converted to Christianity; that by 'the Platonists' he meant Plotinus and his school; and that

he became a Christian because he found something in Christianity which he did not find in Plotinus. What that was, he tells us very clearly. 'In the books of the Platonists, which I read in a Latin translation, I found, not indeed in so many words, but in substance and fortified by many arguments, that "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God; and the same was in the beginning with God; and that all things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made; in him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not." Further, that the soul of man, though it bears witness to the light, is not itself that light, but God, the Logos of God, is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And that "he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." But that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"—this I could not find there. Also I found there that God the Logos was born not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of a husband, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. But that "the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us," this I found not there. I could discover in these books, though expressed in other and varying phrases, that "the Son was in the form of the Father, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God," because by nature he was the same substance. But that "he emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross; wherefore also God exalted him, etc.; this those books do not contain. For that before all times and above all times, thy only-begotten Son abideth unchangeable and coeternal with thee, and that of his fullness all souls receive, that they may be blessed, and that by participation in the eternal wisdom they are renewed, that they may be wise, that is there. But that in due time he died for the ungodly, that thou sparedst not thine only Son but deliveredst him up for us all, this is not there.'

The religious philosophy to which August me was converted, and in which he found satisfaction, was the Platonism of Plotinus with the doctrine of the Incarnation added to it. It matters not for our present purpose that his sympathies were afterwards progressively alienated from the ancient culture,

so that even the Confessions does not accurately represent the state of mind in which he first accepted Christianity. What we have to note is that 'the Logos made flesh, that I not there,' was the decisive consideration which made him a Christian. From a doctrine of the Incarnation follows, as he saw, the love of God for the world, the pity and care of God for the weak and erring, the supreme self-sacrifice of God to seek and save that which was lost. We are here concerned with the Incarnation, not as an isolated historical event, but as the revelation of the highest law of the spiritual world; that God not only draws all life towards himself, as a magnet attracts iron, and not only 'moves the world as the object of its love,' in Aristotle's famous words, but voluntarily 'comes down' to redeem it. If this is true, there is an end of the theory that the Soul would have done better not to have entered the body; for the same moral and spiritual necessity which caused the supreme manifestation of the Divine in the flesh, must also send Souls into the world to do their part in ransoming the creation from the bondage of corruption. This doctrine, so far from being in contradiction with the philosophy which is the subject of this book; seems to me to complete it. It gives an adequate motive for the 'descent of the Soul,' which obviously perplexed Plotinus; it exalts Love as the highest and most characteristic Divine principle, the motive of creation and of redemption alike; it enables us to see the social as well as individual 'purification' wrought by suffering, and entirely forbids that moral isolation which has seemed to us a weak point in Plotinian ethics. But there is one act of surrender which this doctrine demands from us, and this few or no Greek philosophers were willing to make. The Christian is neither independent nor invulnerable. He needs his fellows, as they need him; and he must be content 'to fill up, for his part, what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for his Body's sake.' It seems sometimes as if the Greek thinkers, with all their contempt for pleasure and pain, shrank in the last resort from grasping the nettle of suffering firmly. Nor is there any religion or philosophy, except Christianity, which has really drawn the sting of the world's evil.

A concluding paragraph may be desirable on the attempts made by Christian Platonists to equate the doctrine of the Trinity with the three Divine hypostases of Neoplatonism. I have already said that the attempt was a failure; but it was very natural that it should be made; just as in later times the

Hegelians attempted the same thing, with no better success. Hegelianism would seem logically to place the Holy Spirit above the Father and the Son; Platonism, if it identifies the Logos Christ with Νοῦς, and the Holy Spirit with the universal Soul, cannot maintain that the three Persons are coequal. Numenius may have influenced Christian thought in this matter, before the rise of the Neoplatonic school. His three Gods, as Proclus says, are the Father, the Creator (or instrument in creation) and the World. According to Eusebius, he boasted that he had gone back to the fountain-head in reviving this doctrine of 'three Gods.' The fountain-head is not so much the Timaeus, in which the Demiurge forms the World-Soul according to the pattern of the Ideas, as the Second Epistle of Plato, which Plotinus also uses as an authority. But in Numenius the Second and Third Gods (he does not call them Persons, ὑποστάσις) are not quite distinct; 'the Second and Third Gods are one.' It is interesting to find Origen saying that 'the Stoics call the World as a whole the First God, the Platonists the Second, and some of them the Third.' This hesitation illustrates the great vagueness of Christian speculative thought about the Holy Spirit, down to the fourth century. Clement also refers to the Second Epistle of Plato, and tries to explain the Trinity Platonically. Justin Martyr had done the same before him. Theodoret says explicitly, 'Plotinus and Numenius, developing the thought of Plato, say that he has spoken of three transcendent principles. The immortal principles are the One, Spirit (νοῦς), and the universal Soul. We call the One, or the Good, the Father; Spirit, we call the Son or the Logos; the platonic Soul our divines call the Holy Spirit.' Many other examples might be cited from patristic literature. Plotinus certainly calls his three Divine principles 'hypostases'; but he never thinks of calling them persons. And the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil and the two Gregorys, are determined to maintain the unity of the Godhead against prevalent tendencies to tritheism. This they uphold by making the Father the one fountain of Godhead, and by their doctrine of co-inherence (πριχώρησις), which forbids any sharp distinction of attributes in the Trinity. They thus try to escape the subordinationism of Origen, which naturally results from a close following of Platonic methods of thought. Nevertheless, the metaphor of emanation is used to express the relation of the Third Person to the First. It is perhaps difficult for a religious philosopher to distinguish

between the 'begetting' of the Son and the 'procession' of the Spirit. Christian Platonists like Eckhart consistently teach that the Son is continually and eternally 'begotten' by the Father, a doctrine which takes the relation between the First and Second Person finally out of the region of anthropomorphic symbolism, and seeks to explain it as Plotinus would have explained it.

Æsthetics

Throughout this enquiry we have been hampered by difficulties of nomenclature. 'Æsthetics' is not a good name for the philosophy of τὸ καλόν, the beautiful, noble, and honourable. Αἴσθησις is, as we have seen, Plotinus' name for sensuous perception. But the beautiful, in this philosophy, can only be known by the highest faculty, which apprehends supra-sensuous reality. The word 'æsthete' has also undignified associations in modern English. We must therefore remember, all through this section, that τὸ καλόν includes all that is worthy of love and admiration, and that beautiful objects, as perceived by our senses, are only an adumbration of a Divine attribute which belongs to the spiritual order. It is impossible to separate esthetics, thus understood, from ethics and religion. Even in the dialectic, love is the guide of the intellect, and opens to it the last door of which love alone has the key.

The doctrine of the Beautiful is expounded formally in one chapter of the *Enneads* (1.6), an admirably clear statement which we shall do well to follow.

The Beautiful affects chiefly the sense of sight; but also, in music, the sense of hearing. In a higher region, actions, sciences, and virtues are beautiful. Some beautiful things 'share in' beauty; others, like virtue, are beautiful in themselves. The Stoics say that beauty consists in proportion, and in harmonious colour. If this were true, beauty would reside only in the whole, not in the parts, and simple colours, like gold, would not be beautiful, nor would single notes, however sweet, be beautiful. Still less can this canon be applied to intellectual, moral, and spiritual beauty. There may be inner harmony and proportion in bad things, though they conflict with the harmony of the whole. And since measure and proportion are quantitative

ideas, they are inapplicable to spiritual realities, Beauty is a property in things which the Soul recognises as akin to its own essence, while the ugly is that which it feels to be alien and antipathetic. Beautiful things remind the Soul of its own spiritual nature; they do so because they participate in form (μοχῆ ἴδους), which comes from the Spiritual world. The absence of such form constitutes ugliness; the absolutely ugly is that which is entirely devoid of 'Divine meaning' (θεῖος λόγος). The form co-ordinates and combines the parts which are to make a unity, and this unity is beautiful, as are also its parts. They become beautiful by sharing in the creative power (κοινωνία λόγου) which comes to them from the gods.

When we pass from visible and audible beauty to the beauty which the Soul perceives without the help of the senses, we must remember that we can only perceive what is akin to ourselves—there is such a thing as soul-blindness. Incorporeal things are beautiful when they make us love them. But what constitutes their beauty? Negatively, it is the absence of impure admixture. An ugly character is soiled by base passions; it is like a body caked with mud; in order to restore its natural grace it must be scraped and cleansed. This is why it has been said that all the virtues are a purification. The purified soul becomes a form, a meaning, wholly spiritual and incorporeal. The True beauty of the Soul is to be made like to God. The good and the beautiful are the same, and the ugly and the bad are the same. The Soul becomes beautiful through Spirit; other things, such as actions and studies, are beautiful through Soul which gives them form. The Soul too gives to bodies all the beauty which they are able to receive.

It remains, Plotinus says, to mount to the Good towards which every Soul aspires. 'If anyone has seen it, he knows what I say; he knows how beautiful it is. We must approach its presence stripped of all earthly encumbrances, as the initiated enter the sanctuary naked. With what love we must yearn to see the source of all existence, of all life and thought! He who has not yet seen it desires it as the Good; he who has seen it admires it as the Beautiful. He is struck at once with amazement and pleasure; he is seized with a painless stupefaction, he loves with a true love and a mighty longing which laughs at

other loves and disdains other beauties. If we could behold him who gives all beings their perfection if we could rest in the contemplation of him and become like him, what other beauty could we need? Being the supreme beauty, he makes those who love him beautiful and lovable. This is the great end, the supreme aim, of Souls; it is the want of this vision that makes men unhappy. He who desires to see the vision must shut his eyes to terrestrial things, not allowing himself to run after corporeal beauties, lest he share the fate of Narcissus, and immerse his soul in deep and muddy pools, abhorred of Spirit. And yet we may train ourselves by contemplating noble things here on earth, especially noble deeds, always pressing on to higher things, and remembering above all that as the eye could not behold the sun unless it were sunlike itself, so the Soul can only see beauty by becoming beautiful itself.'

There are a few other passages which throw light on the doctrine of the Beautiful. The relation of the Beautiful to the Absolute, the Good, is discussed in 6.7.32, a passage which has been already considered in the chapter on the Absolute. I have there shown that Beauty is really given the same dignity as Truth and Goodness in this system. In another place, Reality (οὐσία) is identified with Beauty. The everlasting (τὸ ἄ? / δῖον) is said to be 'akin to the Beautiful.'

Plotinus makes a distinct advance in æsthetic theory in refusing to make symmetry the essence of the Beautiful. This had been one of the errors of Greek art-criticism. Plotinus does not anticipate the profound saying of Bacon, 'There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion'; but he insists that beauty is essentially the direct expression of reason or meaning, in sense, by æsthetic semblance. The forms of beauty are the mode in which the creative activity of the universal Soul stamps the image of itself on Matter. Like all other creative activity, the production of beauty is not directly willed. So Krause says, 'If Spirit freely rules the form of what is individual according to the Idea, beauty arises of itself as by a beneficent necessity' (p.). The question why such and such forms express spiritual beauty is not much discussed; the answer 'because they are symmetrical' has been dismissed. The soul recognises in certain forms a meaning which it understands and loves; the sensuous forms have a natural affinity to certain

ideas. Plotinus believed that beautiful forms in this world have a real resemblance to their prototypes in the spiritual world. Earth is a good copy of heaven; earthly beauty, we must remember, is the creation of Soul, not a property of matter. But the beauty which we find in objects is not put into them by the individual observer. All beauty is the work of Soul, but not of the individual Soul which admires it. The individual Soul can only appreciate what is akin to itself; but it is not the perceiving mind of the individual which gives to inert matter a meaning by impressing 'form' upon it. That would be to make the individual Soul the creator of the world, which Plotinus says we must not do. And yet the individual Soul is never wholly separated from the universal Soul; and we must further remember that no perception, not even the perception of external objects, is mere apprehension. Something is always done or made in the act of perception. The Soul, in contemplating Beauty, is identifying itself with the formative activity of its own higher principle.

In the Eighth Chapter of the Fifth Ennead he says that 'everything is beautiful in its own true Being'; the beauty of true Being is the beauty of the archetype. The same passage develops the notion of the supreme holiness and beauty of light. 'Everything shines yonder.' Much more important is the argument by which Plotinus finds room for Art in the realm of the beautiful. The artist realises the beautiful in proportion as his work is real. The true artist does not copy nature. Here he agrees with Philostratus, who in an epoch-making passage says that great works of art are produced not by imitation (the Aristotelian μίμησις), but by imagination (φαντασία), 'a wiser creator than imitation; for imitation copies what it has seen, imagination what it has not seen.' The true artist fixes his eyes on the archetypal Logoi, and tries to draw inspiration from the spiritual power which created the forms of bodily beauty. Art is not only genuinely creative; it is among the highest and most permanent forms of creation. Some spiritual values are revealed only in art. The artist has more freedom than is possible to mechanical skill or to outward action. Art, therefore, is a mode of contemplation, which creates because it must. This is a real advance upon Plato and Aristotle. Plotinus does not, like Schopenhauer, arrange the arts in an ascending scale—sculpture, painting, poetry, music; music being the highest because it works with the most ethereal medium; but this is genuine Platonism. There are said to be some

musicians who prefer reading the score to hearing it played. If such men exist, they are ultra-Platonist.

What would Plotinus have said to Hegel's opinion that we have left behind the stage of culture in which art is the highest means by which we apprehend the Divine? We can no longer adore images, and art no longer satisfies our religious instincts. Perhaps this change is not so universal as Hegel thought; but Plotinus would have seen nothing unexpected in it. By emphasising the beauty of noble actions, Plotinus agrees with Kant and Lotze that beauty consists, partly at least, in harmony with a purpose. Lotze even suggests that it arises in the conflict between what is and what ought to be; but this is not Platonic. It is unquestionable that our age does not naturally express itself in beautiful forms, The self-consciousness of modern architecture illustrates well the doctrine of Plotinus that we spoil our creations by thinking too much about them. But it would be rash to assume that a time will never come when we shall again create beautiful things without knowing why they are beautiful. The ugliness of our civilisation can hardly be set down to the fact that we have advanced beyond the artistic mode of self-expression.

Plotinus is not very happy in his treatment of ugliness. Ugliness is not, as he supposes, absence of form; it is false form. The ugliest thing in nature, a human face distorted by vile passions, revolts us because the evil principle seems there to have set its mark on what was meant to bear the image of God. Plotinus tells us that all virtue is purification; but he never admits that there can be 'defilement of the flesh and spirit,' though all real ugliness consists not in the incrustation of incorporeal purity by something alien to itself, but in indications that the Soul itself has been stained and perverted. There is nothing repulsive in the sight of a marble statue half-covered with mud, or in a fine picture blackened with dirt and smoke; yet this is the type of ugliness which Plotinus gives us in his theory of evil. While we sympathise with his determination to make no compromise with metaphysical dualism, we cannot help feeling that his optimistic view of the world causes him to 'heal slightly' the wounds of humanity, in æsthetics as in morals.

But there is deep truth in this philosophy of the Beautiful. We cannot see real beauty while we are wrapped up in our petty personal interests. These are the

muddy vesture of decay, of which we must rid ourselves. Art is the wide world's memory of things, and beauty is the universal and spiritual making itself known sensuously, as Hegel says. *Æsthetic* pleasure is in truth the pleasure of recognition and consequent liberation. The soul sees the reflection of its own best self; and forthwith enters into a larger life. This is effected by recognising some of its hidden sympathies in nature. Very much of the pleasure which we find in poetry and painting arises from brilliant translations of an idea from one language to another, showing links between diverse orders of being, symbols of the unseen which are no arbitrary types, or evidences of the fundamental truth about creation, that the universal Soul made the world in the likeness of its own principle, Spirit. Ultimately all is the self-revelation of the One and the Good.

Among later writers on *æsthetics*, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann are all indebted to Plotinus. So is Goethe, who regards the unity of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good as the absolute ground of all Being. Shaftesbury, at the end of the seventeenth century, was a kindred spirit. He finds that there are three orders or degrees of beauty—‘first, the dead forms, which have no forming power, no action, or intelligence. Next, the forms which form; that is, which have intelligence, action, and operation. Thirdly, that order of beauty which forms not only such as we call mere forms, but even the forms which form. For we ourselves are notable architects in Matter, and can show lifeless bodies brought into form, and fashioned by our own hands; but that which fashions even minds themselves contains in itself all the beauties fashioned by those minds, and is consequently the principle, source, and fountain of all beauty. Therefore whatever beauty appears in our second order of forms, or whatever is derived or produced from thence, all this is eminently, principally, and originally in this last order of supreme and sovereign beauty. Thus architecture, music, and all which is of human invention, resolves itself into this last order.’

It is not easy to find much similarity to Plotinus in the *æsthetic* theory of Croce, which is just now attracting much attention. He holds that beauty does not belong to things; it is not a psychic fact, it belongs to man's activity, to spiritual energy. *Æsthetic* activity is imaginative and concrete intuition, as

opposed to the logical and general conception. It belongs to the Will, and its manifestations are Soul-states—passion, sentiment, personality. 'These are found in every art and determine its lyrical character.' Art is expression. Croce insists rightly that we cannot appreciate a work of art without, in a sense, reproducing the work of the artist in ourselves.

Concluding Reflections

I HAVE admitted that throughout these I have studied Plotinus as a disciple, though not an uncritical one. I hold that this is the right attitude towards a great thinker; and if an ancient philosopher is not a great thinker, I do not think it is worth while to spend several years in studying him. I should not care to write a book about a philosopher whose system seemed to me entirely out of date, or vitiated by fundamental errors. Such books are not uncommon; but they seldom really elucidate the thought of the author who is so criticised, and the tone of superiority which they assume is unbecoming. A great writer has a message for other times as well as for his own; but in order to bring this out it is by no means incumbent on his modern expositor to observe the same proportions, or the same emphasis, as his author; nor need he be afraid of using modern terms and trains of thought to develop speculations which his author handles only as a pioneer. I know, for example, that the doctrine of reality as a kingdom of values, on which I have laid stress, is not explicit in Plotinus; and that on the other side the Platonic and Aristotelian categories occupy much more space in the Enneads than in my book about them. But I have tried throughout to deal with Neoplatonism as a living and not as a dead philosophy, and to consider what value it has for us in the twentieth century. My own convictions are, of course, derived from many other sources besides the later Greek philosophy, and I may have sometimes read them into my author. But I still think that his real contribution to the never-ending debate about ultimate truth and reality is more likely to be brought out by the method of respectful discipleship than by the criticism of those who have been content to classify the Enneads among other specimens of extinct philosophies, and to place their author, as they hope, on his right shelf in their collection of fossils.

I said in my introductory lecture that I hoped we might find in Plotinus some message of comfort in our present distress. The greater part of my book was written long before the war, and the materials were put together without any direct reference to contemporary problems. It was indeed a pleasure to me to

escape from politics and controversies into a purer air. When I began my task, our civilisation was plethoric, congested, dyspeptic. The complacent and sometimes blatant self-confidence of the Victorian Age had given place to widespread and growing discontent. The great accumulations of a hundred prosperous years seemed to be only apples of Sodom. Universal covetousness had outstripped the means of gratifying it; the possessors of wealth were frightened, the less fortunate majority were sour and bitter. The ideas on which the great industrial structure was based were becoming discredited. The thinly veiled materialism of nineteenth century science was tottering under blows dealt from every side, with the result that a coherent though very unsatisfactory philosophy of life had lost its grip, and left nothing in its place but a sentimental irrationalism and scepticism, powerless against the inroads of superstition and the waves of popular emotion. The Government of the country had fallen into a state of the most pitiable imbecility, cowering before every turbulent faction, and attempting to buy off every threat of organised lawlessness. In the midst of great outward prosperity, the symptoms of national disintegration had never been so menacing. Certain idols of the market-place commanded the lip-service of the politician and the journalist; but of robust faith and clear vision there was little or none. I now lay down my pen amid more tragic scenes. Civilisation lies prostrate, as a maniac who after burning her house and murdering her children is bleeding to death from self-inflicted wounds, her wealth and credit destroyed, her hopes of reasonable and orderly progress shattered. The parallel between the decay of our social order, the beginning of which I think we are now witnessing, and the economic ruin of the Roman empire in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries seems now even closer than when I wrote my introductory lecture. In particular, the fate of the curiales, the middle class, in the Roman empire is likely to repeat itself in this country, That unfortunate bourgeoisie was saddled with nearly the whole weight of a continually increasing taxation. At last, as Sir Samuel Dill tells US, 'the curial's personal freedom was curtailed on every side. If he travelled abroad, that was an injury to his city; if he absented himself for five years, his property was confiscated. He could not dispose of his property, which the State regarded as security for the discharge of his financial obligations. The curial in one law is denied the asylum of the

Church, along with insolvent debtors and fugitive slaves. When he is recalled from some refuge to which he has escaped, his worst punishment is to be replaced in his original rank....Many fled to a hermitage, others hid themselves among miners and lime-burners.' The money wrung from the taxpayers went partly for wars and the army, partly to a host of officials, and partly in doles to the rabble of the great cities. A fiscal tyranny hardly less galling may be in store for the class to which most of us here belong. It will therefore be our wisdom to see what philosophy can do for us in helping us to bear the inevitable.

If we consider, in the light of Platonism, the causes which, at a week's notice, turned Europe into a cooperative suicide club, we are driven to look for some super-individual psychical force, and it is tempting to think of the old hypothesis of an evil World-Soul. On this plausible theory, the race-spirit is an irreclaimable savage dressed in the costume of civilisation, who has remained morally and intellectually on the level of the Stone Age. His acquisitions have been purely external; his nature has not been changed. Civilised man, we may remind ourselves, when at peace usually devotes that part of his time which is at his own disposal to playing at those occupations which are the serious business of the savage. His games are mock battles; his sports mock hunting; his sacred music (a cynic might say) recalls the howls by which the savage tries to attract the attention of his god. But from time to time he grows tired of shams, and craves for the real thing, hot and strong. So Driesch in his Gifford says that 'mankind is always advancing, but man always remains the same.' A biologist might remind us that since there is no natural selection in favour of morally superior types, there is no reason to expect any real progress in the human species.

Now it is quite true that the thought-habits of a hundred thousand years are not likely to have been very much modified by a few centuries of civilisation, interrupted as they have been by the almost unmitigated barbarism of the Dark Ages between Justinian and the twelfth century. But all pessimistic estimates of human nature based on survivals of savage instincts are condemned by the doctrine which Plotinus asserts as strongly as Aristotle, that the 'nature' of everything is the best that it can grow into; and that the

best of human nature is divine. We have to remember that outbreaks of moral savagery in civilised humanity are neither normal nor habitual nor the result of a bad will. They no longer appear without stimulation; they are not consciously willed; they are now a disease. On the other hand, the noble qualities of heroism and self-sacrifice, which have never been more conspicuous than in the course of this tragedy, are consciously willed; they are essential parts of our human character as it is. Our complex nature, no doubt, contains elements which link us to pre-human ancestors; the transformations of the embryo before birth, which seem to recapitulate the whole course of biological evolution, are a proof of that; but does it not also contain anticipations of a higher state than we have yet reached, but which we have a right to claim as human because we find it manifested in human beings? The ascent of the soul to God, which is made by thousands in the short span of a single life, may be an earnest of what humanity shall one day achieve. Nor is it quite correct to deny all progress within the historical period. There are, after all, horrors described in the Old Testament, in Greek history, in Roman history, in medieval history, which only the Bolsheviks have rivalled, and which indicate a degree of depravity which we may perhaps hope that civilised humanity has outgrown. And if there has been perceptible progress in the last two thousand years, the improvement may be considerable in the next ten thousand, a small fraction, probably, of the whole life of the species. The Soul of the race is no demon, but a child with great possibilities. It is capable of what it has already achieved in the noblest human lives, and the character which it has accepted as the perfect realisation of the human ideal is the character of Christ.

We should also greatly misapprehend the causes of this tragedy if we sought them merely in atavistic instincts. Hobbes enumerates the causes of war as 'competition, distrust, and glory.' we should supplement these with the help of Plato's diagnosis, that a warlike atmosphere indicates disease within the state. In this case a military monarchy, with an admirable scientific organization for peace as well as war, found itself threatened by intestine troubles. A successful war seemed to its rulers to be the Only prophylactic against a democratic revolution, and to be the less of two evils. We know what Plato thought of the rule of the 'stilted drones,' the demagogues; and

we may perhaps understand him—and the Germans—better ten years hence. Our opponents would probably have preferred to keep the advantages of military organization without another great war. But there is a fatal logic about militarism. A man may build himself a throne of bayonets, but he cannot sit on it; and he cannot avow that the bayonets are meant to keep his own subjects quiet. So the instrument has to be used; an occasion for war has to be found; and the nation has to be sedulously indoctrinated with fanatical patriotism, and hatred or contempt for the alien. Fear and distrust are also artificially stimulated; and this is easily done. As Bentham said very truly about his own countrymen: ‘the dread of being duped by other nations—the notion that foreign heads are more able, though at the same time foreign hearts are less honest than our own, has always been one of our prevailing weaknesses.’ patriotism, once kindled into a flame, has the tremendous power of all spiritual ideas. In our time it connects itself with the idea of nationality, producing not only great self-devotion, but inordinate pride, and esprit de corps pushed to insanity. The true moral is that ideas are terrible things; they are stronger than private interest, stronger conscience. In the future we shall see a great conflict between the idea of nationalism and that of internationalism, which divides men differently, by classes or religions, or types of culture. We shall hear again such tirades as this of Lamartine:

*‘Nations! Mot pompeux pour dire barbarie!
L’amour s’arrête t’il où s’arrêtent vos pas?
Déchirez ces drapeaux, une autre voix vous crie:
L’égoïsme et la haine ont seuls une patrie;
La Fraternité n’en a pas.’*

But we shall be sadly deceived if we suppose that internationalism, any more than nationalism, means peace and goodwill.

There is no ground for pessimism about the future of the race, if we take very long views; and there is every reason to hope that as individuals we are not debarred from the highest life. ‘Living one’s own life in truth is living the life of all the race,’ says Tagore. But we shall need all that religion and philosophy can do for us in the troublous time which certainly awaits us. The Stoic and Pythagorean disciplines will again come into their own. In ancient times a

considerable austerity of life was expected from the philosopher, and one of the chief attractions of philosophy was that it made its votary indifferent to most of the things which other men desire. For us, too, to get rid of the superfluous will be the only road to freedom. But it should be a Greek austerity, a beautiful, well-ordered and healthy life, not like the squalor (Cynic, not Neoplatonic) of the Emperor Julian and the Christian monks. The cult of the simple life is difficult only when it is left to a few eccentrics. When it is professed and followed by a whole class, it is easy. It should be based, as it was in antiquity, on a separation of real from factitious wants. As soon as we cease to be afraid of fashion (of δόξα, as the Greeks said), we can cut down superfluities right and left without being any the poorer in comfort or in happiness. The cheerful acceptance, by the richer classes in this country, of the loss of the luxuries and comforts to which they are accustomed, is a good omen for the future. It does not detract from the nobility of their conduct to say that they have found these sacrifices easier to bear than they expected. Our motive must not be the selfish one of making ourselves invulnerable. We have a precious tradition to preserve at all costs—the deposit of truth committed to the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans, which is now threatened by a collapse of authority which may end in barbarism. What the Church did in the Dark Ages, the combined forces of Christianity and humanism must do now. We need a class withdrawn from the competitive life. The struggle for existence, when individual, sharpens a man's faculties and develops his intelligence; the collective struggle tends to make a man a mere cog in a machine and narrows him to a poorer life. And yet individual competition is only an inchoate stage towards group-competition; the right to combine is the logical development of laissez faire; the strike, and war, are its fruits. Unrestricted competition, it appears, must end in civil and international war. Group-competition sinks from inanition in the absence of external danger, and the group organised for competition decays rapidly when this stimulus is withdrawn; on the other hand, when the competition is acute and effective, the competitors destroy each other, or the victor becomes parasitic on the vanquished and at last disappears. Hence the only final integration is a spiritual one, for spiritual movements are non-competitive, and on this plane only is there real community of interests. Moral progress is only possible by

the resistance of individuals to herd-instincts, and the resistance itself is a movement of the race-spirit; there are no really independent thinkers. It is a struggle for self-adaptation to a changing environment. Our task is very much the same as that which was laid on Plotinus and his successors in their day. They also had a precious tradition to preserve; and, as happens so often in human life, they won their victory through apparent defeat. They resisted Christianity, and were beaten; but the Church carried off so much of their honey to its own hive that Porphyry himself would have been half satisfied if he had seen the event. For us, the whole heritage of the past is at stake together; we cannot preserve Platonism without Christianity, nor Christianity without Platonism, nor civilisation without both.

Neoplatonism differs from popular Christianity in that it offers us a religion the truth of which is not contingent on any particular events, whether past or future. It floats free of nearly all the 'religious difficulties' which have troubled the minds of believers since the age of science began. It is dependent on no miracles, on no unique revelation through any historical person, on no narratives about the beginning of the world, on no prophecies of its end. No scientific or historical discovery can refute it, and it requires no apologetic except the testimony of spiritual experience. There is a Christian philosophy of which the same might be said. There are Christians who believe in the divinity of Christ because they have known Him as an indwelling Divine Spirit; who believe that He rose because they have felt that He has risen; who believe that He will judge the world because He is already the judge of their own lives. Such independence of particular historical events, some of which are supported by insufficient evidence, gives great strength and confidence to the believer. But it does not satisfy those who crave for miracle as a bridge between the eternal and temporal worlds, and who are not happy unless they can intercalate 'acts of God' into what seems to them the soulless mechanism of nature. Christianity, however, is essentially a struggle for an independent spiritual life, and it can only exert its true influence in the world when it realises that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and when it stands on its own foundations, without those extraneous supports which begin by strengthening a religion and end by strangling it.

In most other respects the two systems are closely allied. Neoplatonism, like Christianity, gives us a clear and definite standard of values, absolute and eternal. What this standard is has, I hope, been sufficiently shown by quotations in these . It may be objected that Plotinus gives us only principles and outlines, without imparting much help in concrete problems, such as the choice of a profession, the use of money, and the political duties of a citizen. The same criticism might be, and has been, brought against the ethics of the New Testament. But the man who studies Plotinus as a moral guide will not often be at a loss except in problems which it is not the province of religion or philosophy to solve. The vitally important thing is that we should believe in Goodness, Truth, and Beauty as Divine and absolute principles, the source and goal of the whole cosmic process, and not as imaginings of the human mind, or ideal values which have no existence.

Closely connected with this faith in absolute values is that conception of eternal life which has been discussed, perhaps at disproportionate length, in these . I know that some of my hearers and readers will probably think that I have been too ready to separate immortality from the quality of duration, and to sink individuality in the all-embracing life of soul and spirit. As regards the first, I agree that our accepted methods of moral valuation assume that duration has a meaning and value for the life of spirit. We prefer what we call the higher goods partly because we find that they are the most durable; and the idea of teleology is inseparable from that of value. Persistence, as I have said, seems to be the time-form of eternity, and progress the time-expression of the Divine goodness. With regard to our individuality, Plotinus would not object to the statement that Spirit is individual in each of us, because it is potentially all in each of us. To deny the individuality of Spirit would be to believe in νοητά without νοῦς; and we are often warned in the Enneads against supposing that the Great Spirit, or the Universal Soul, is split up among individual spirits or souls. The 'offspring' of Spirit is not fragmentary spirit-life, but souls living in worlds half-realised. In ethics, the sense of guilt is the awful guardian of our personal identity, but the sense of forgiveness is the blessed assurance that we are sharers in a higher personality than the self that sins. The great difficulty, how to account for individuation, is lessened when we think of the individual focus as potentially all-embracing. We are limited,

not so much because we are distinct individuals as because we are half-baked souls. The perfect man would not be less perfect because he lived in a particular century and country. A broad mind is not cramped by a narrow sphere. We should not be wiser if we lived in a dozen scattered bodies. It seems to me that when Bradley finds finite centres 'inexplicable,' and when he is driven to say that 'the plurality of souls is appearance and their existence is not genuine,' his difficulty is caused by his theory that the Absolute 'divides itself into centres,' which is surely impossible. The notion that all individuals are (as it were) shaken up together in a bag, the Absolute, thus neutralising each other's defects, seems very crude. Plotinus, I venture to think, navigates successfully the narrow channel between these rocks and the opposite error of pluralism. The soul needs real otherness; else there could be no love, and no worship; but it needs also real identity, and for the same reason.

Neoplatonism respects science, and every other activity of human reason. Its idealism is rational and sane throughout. The supremacy of the reason is a favourite theme of the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century, who had drunk deep of the Neoplatonic spirit. 'Sir, I oppose not rational to spiritual,' writes Whichcote to Tuckney, 'for spiritual is most rational.' And again, 'Reason is the Divine governor of man's life; it is the very voice of God.' The difference between this reverence for man's intellectual endowments, which always characterises true Platonism, and the sentimental, superstitious emotionalism of popular 'mysticism' is much more than a difference of temperament. It is because he is in rebellion against nature and its laws, or because he is too ignorant or indolent to think, that the emotionalist flies to the supernatural and the occult. Very different is the Platonic spirit, which breathes in such acts of devotion as this of Wordsworth:

*'Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!
Thou Soul, that art the eternity of thought!
And givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul,
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,*

*But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear.'*

But while reverencing the natural order as the *modus operandi* of the Universal Soul, Neoplatonism asserts consistently that the world as seen by the spiritual man is a very different world from that which is seen by the carnal man. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned; and the whole world, to him who can see it as it is, is irradiated by Spirit. A sober trust in religious experience, when that experience has been earned, is an essential factor in Platonic faith. Our vision is clarified by the conquest of fleshly lusts, by steady concentration of the thoughts, will, and affections on things that are good and true and lovely; by disinterestedness, which thinks of no reward, and by that progressive unification of our nature which in the Gospels is called the single eye. 'It is everywhere the whole mind,' says Lotze, 'at once thinking, feeling, and passing moral judgments, which out of the full completeness of its nature produces in us these unspoken first principles.' Julian of Norwich says the same thing in simpler and nobler words: 'Our faith cometh of the natural love of the soul, and of the clear light of our reason, and of the steadfast mind which we have of God in our first making.' There are three avenues to the knowledge of God and of the world and of ourselves—purposive action, reasoning thought, and loving affection, a threefold cord which is not quickly broken. To quote Wordsworth again:

*'We live by admiration, hope, and love,
And even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.'*

So the whole of Platonism, on its religious side, may be summed up in the beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' For, in the words of Smith, the Cambridge Platonist, 'Such as men themselves are, such will God appear to them to be.'

If we see things as they are, we shall live as we ought; and if we live as we ought, we shall see things as they are. This is not a vicious circle, but the interplay of contemplation and action, of *θωαί* and *πραξις*, in which wisdom consists. Action is the ritual of contemplation, as the dialectic is its creed. The conduct of life rests on an act of faith, which begins as an experiment, and ends as an experience. Platonism affirms, no doubt, a very deep optimism; it claims that the venture of faith is more than justified; but has anyone who has tried it left on record that the experiment has failed?

Nevertheless, it is the extreme optimism of the Neo-platonic creed which gives us pause. Are there not certain stubborn facts in life, facts more than ever apparent just now, for which it fails to account? Would a perfectly good and wise man see the world we live in as it is and pronounce that 'it is very good'? Would he not, in proportion to the clearness of his vision of what the world ought to be, be filled with grief, pity, and indignation at what it is? The brave man may conquer his own fears, and make light of his own misfortunes; but ought he, like the Stoic sage, to practise benevolence without pity, acquiescence in inevitable evil without revolt, and to love the Lord without hating the thing that is evil?

Plato recognised that we cannot get rid of moral evil without pain. But how slight is the emphasis, and how little he grasps the law of vicarious suffering! The Cross is 'foolishness to the Greeks,' as St. Paul says. And yet the place which Plotinus gives to Love should have carried him all the way. If the vision of the Godhead is reserved for the 'spirit in love,' it follows from the principles of this philosophy that God is love; for we can only see what we are. But if God is love, He must 'declare His almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity'; He must reveal Himself most fully in the supreme activity of love, that is, self-sacrifice. If this is admitted, it follows that the most inalienable and distinctive attribute of Divinity is no longer deathlessness, or unlimited power, or freedom from inner perturbation; it is sympathy, and willingness to suffer for others. If this is the character of the Deity, it must be our ideal, for, as Plotinus says, 'our aim is not to be without sin, but to be what God is.' Suffering must be either accepted or shirked by every man in a world where 'truth's for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne.'

We have seen that other religions besides Christianity worshipped a suffering and even a dying God; but the Neoplatonist would, I fear, have shrunk from such a doctrine with horror, or dismissed it with contempt. It would have seemed to undo all the work of deliverance which his philosophy had built up for him, and to plunge him back into the slough of despond, the morass of pleasures and pains. How can a perfectly good man, much more a God, feel pain and grief? Is he unable to control these emotions, or is he dissatisfied with the inevitable operations of nature, which the sage accepts as preordained? Can a Divine creator be dissatisfied with his own work, and submit to martyrdom in order to undo the evil which his own laws have indirectly caused?

And yet until we accept the doctrine that vicarious suffering, that scandal of the moral world on the theory of individualism, is Divine, the sting of the world's evil remains undrawn. 'Vicarious suffering,' I have said elsewhere, 'which on the individualist theory seems so monstrous and unjust as to throw a shadow on the character of God, is easy to understand if we give up our individualism. It is a necessity. For the sinner cannot suffer for his own healing, precisely because he is a sinner. The trouble which he brings on himself cannot heal his wounds. Redemption must be vicarious; it must be wrought by the suffering of the just for the unjust.' Irenæus says that Christ, 'for His immense love towards us, was made what we are, that He might make us what He is.' Plotinus, as we have seen, insists that no man may deliver his brother, and there is, of course, a sense in which this is true; but it seems to me that he fails to apply his doctrine of the unity and solidarity of soul-life exactly where it might be most fruitful.

Love and suffering cut the deepest channels in our souls, and reveal the most precious of God's secrets. Even in national life we can see that the characteristic utterances of ages of prosperity—the Augustan Ages of history—are less penetrating and of less universal significance than those which have been wrung from nations in agony. The uses of chastisement have been often celebrated. Plato in the *Gorgias* argues that it is a misfortune to escape punishment, when we have deserved it; Augustine says, 'Nulla poena, quanta poena!' But the journey which brings at last both wisdom and

salvation is not a sad one. 'Hard and rugged is the path of virtue,' says Hesiod, 'at first; but when one comes to the top, it is easy, though it be hard.'

The philosophy which holds that we are independent and impervious monads, *solida pollentia simplicitate*, makes it so utterly impossible to find justice in the world, that some of our pluralists have fallen back on the old theory of a limited, struggling God, who does his best to overcome insuperable obstacles. This dualism corresponds to the attitude of the pure moralist, who is occupied in combating evil without trying to account for it; but it is intolerable both for philosophy and for religion. Platonism and Christianity prefer to reject individualism. No injustice is done in the real world, because the individual who is the subject of claims is an abstraction, and the real self, the soul, is willing, for a time, to bear the sins and sorrows of others. In the language of Christianity, the good man is willing to 'fill up, for his part, what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ for his Body's sake, the Church.' And the sacrifice is effectual; the redemption is won. Evil, which can never be overcome by evil, can be overcome by good. The Christian doctrine that if one soul has triumphed completely in this combat, all share in the victory, is quite intelligible on Neoplatonic principles, in spite of the sentence in the *Enneads* which seems to glance at the doctrine in a hostile manner. It is not intelligible to a modern individualist, nor can it be defended by changing it, as Western theology has often done, into a forensic transaction.

Humanity needs martyrs. Plotinus says that it does not much matter if the good are killed by the bad, for it only means that the actors change their masks; the good man does not really die. But this is a kind of docetism. It cheapens the sacrifice, which only the heroic victim has the right to do. Our dying soldiers may say and feel,

'Nil igitur mors est ad nos, neque pertinet hilum';

but we must not say it for them. The evils wrought by sin in the world are not imaginary. We are only justified in hoping that they are the symptoms by which the disease may work itself out. The disease is the selfishness, stupidity, and moral ugliness which obstruct the manifestation in the world of the Divine attributes of goodness, wisdom, and beauty. The symptoms are the

suffering through which these evils are recognised as evil. The fact of suffering is not an evil but a good, since it is the chief means of progress, of which it implies the possibility. A common error in our day is horror at the symptoms and neglect of the disease.

There were many before the war who wished to be Christians without the Cross; there are still some, but they are fewer. The soldier and the soldier's family have learnt the lesson without difficulty; those who have used the war to increase their own wages or profits have yet to learn it. The jealous determination not to put into the common stock a pennyworth more than we are allowed to take out of it has embittered modern life more than any economic inequalities.

Human happiness depends on the ratio between the human costs of living and the return which we get for them; and human costs are very different from work and wages. They are determined by our standard of values. Who are the happiest people, so far as we can judge? I should say, the real Christians, whose affections are set on things above; whose citizenship is in heaven; whose thoughts are occupied with things that are pure, noble, and of good report; who believe that all things work together for good to those who love God; and whose labour is costless to themselves, because it is a labour of love. Next to these, the happiest are those whose lives are devoted to some great super-personal interest, such as science, art, literature, or philosophy. And thirdly, those who, without any clear vision, follow duty as the 'stern daughter of the voice of God,' and strive to 'live ever in their great Taskmaster's eye.' And who are the most unhappy? The selfish, especially the envious, the grasping, and the fearful. These are the men whose work, whether well paid or ill, costs them most; and no social readjustments can satisfy them, because such desires are, as Plato says, insatiable and incapable of being gratified. Envy especially is a passion to which no pleasure is attached. Unhappy also are they who worship the various idols of the marketplace, the fetishes of herd-morality. In proportion as their devotion is sincere, they must feel the bitterness of disappointment; where it is insincere, they become, Plotinus might say, like the parrots and monkeys whom they imitate.

Neglect of these truths has thrown our whole view of life out of perspective, and it is more distorted now than in times which it is fashionable to despise. The Puritan idea was that productive work is the best service of God, the task for which we were sent into the world, to prepare ourselves for the repose of eternity. By attributing a sacramental virtue to secular labour they made a real ethical advance; for this is what we miss in Platonism and Catholicism. But Puritanism was incapable of intelligent self-criticism; and in practice it led to a vast accumulation of money and commodities without any wisdom in using them. Protestant civilisation has in consequence been ugly and tasteless, and all classes alike have been weighed down by the supposed necessity of satisfying wants which in reality had no existence. In defect of any rational standard of good, a merely quantitative valuation took its place. The success of a nation was measured by its statistics of trade and population, the success of a man by the number of pounds sterling that he was 'worth.' Our litanies were tables of figures; the word 'expansion' stirred in us a luscious sense of pride. But though the Puritan ethics were unintelligent, they were not entirely out of touch with the laws of nature, like some of the fetishes which we now delight to honour. There has never been a time when the ruinous error that we can revoke the laws of nature by ignoring them has been more prevalent than in modern social politics. 'Science,' it has been wisely said, 'is not the handmaid but the purgatory of religion'—and of politics. A bad philosophy leaves us in such a cruel world that we dare not look the facts in the face. This is the origin of sentimentalism, ultimately the most merciless of all moods. The dethronement of these modern idols is one of the greatest services which a sound philosophy can render to humanity.

But how shall we bring our criticism of life to bear on the chaotic mass of prejudice, sentimentalism, and cupidity which goes by the name of public opinion? Plotinus will tell us that if we want to help others, we must testify that which we have seen. No one needs more than the Platonist to 'make his life a true poem,' for in his philosophy moral effort and moral experience supply the materials for spiritual intuition and creation. The 'civic virtues,' as we have seen, must be practised, but as a kind of symbol or sacrament of the eternal order. The philosopher, Plato thinks, will not willingly take part in the politics of his city, but will live as a citizen of 'his own country, of which a

type is laid up in heaven.' Opinions may differ as to how far Plato's good man can mix in politics at the present time; but unless the philosopher thinks often and earnestly how he may help to build a city of God on earth, he is likely to miss his way to the heavenly city. It would be a worthy and fruitful task to try to work out some of the problems of human society in the light of Christian Platonism. The difficulty of finding a decent form of civil government has hitherto baffled human ingenuity. This unsolved problem has been and still is the deepest tragedy of history. Nation after nation fails to answer the riddle of the Sphinx, and is hurled down or torn in pieces. The strength and weakness of military monarchies have been summarised in this lecture; and we must add the probability that the monarch may be a fool or a knave. Readers of the Republic will know where to look for a true character of democracy. Theocracy, which in theory should be the best of all governments, is in practice one of the worst, since, except in brief periods of spiritual exaltation, the priesthood has no physical force behind it, and must rely on superstition and bigotry, which accordingly have to be stimulated by keeping the nation in ignorance and intellectual servitude. The problem of the reformer is complicated by the fact that we must accept the heavy burdens of the past. The wisest man can only achieve an application of the living past to the living present. Plotinus, as we have seen expresses no preference for one form of government over another. His remedy for all social evils is to suppress the lusts that war in our members, and to correct our standard of values, remembering that we make our own world, by the reaction of our Soul upon its environment, and of the environment upon our Soul. Many of our discontents are externalised soul-aches. By brooding over them we hurt our Souls and immerse them in 'Matter.' A restoration of internal and external peace is possible only when we rise to the vision of the real, the spiritual world. When we consider the achievements of any nation which even for fifty years has grasped a fringe of the mantle of God, we shall not think that Christ, or Plato, is bidding us to lose substance for shadow. The Soul of the race mocks at the triumphs of Sennacherib and Attila. They, and Cleon, are only remembered because their victims have thought it worth while to hold them up to infamy. Human societies are happy in proportion as they have their treasure in that class of goods which are not lessened by being shared. As

Proclus says, 'Goods that are indivisible are those which many may possess at once, and no one is worse off in respect of them because another has them. Divisible goods are those in which one man's gain is another man's loss.' This is after all the truth which the philosopher and the minister of religion must preach incessantly; for *numquam nimis dicitur quod numquam satis discitur*. Neither those who bow before the Crucified nor those who venerate the hero of the *Phaedo* can have any dealings with the men who wish to make the Christian Church the jackal of any dominant political party. Such movements are always with us. They fill chapters in the history of ecclesiasticism, but they have no connexion with either religion or philosophy.

Is there any marked difference in the upward path, as traced by the Platonic mystic, and other schemes which have gained wide acceptance? The essence of Neo-platonic mysticism is the belief that the Soul, which lives here in self-contradiction, must break in succession every form in which it tends to crystallise. This is where it differs most from Catholicism, as generally taught. Catholicism promises peace as the immediate result of submission and obedience, and even Catholics of Newman's calibre have recorded that their spiritual journeys were 'of course' over, and their mental histories at an end, when they came to rest in the Catholic fold. But for the mystic there is no halting-place, no rest from striving to see what he cannot see what he cannot yet see, and to become what as yet he is not. To stop short anywhere is to leave the quest unfinished. Cases of arrested development are the rule, not the exception. The world arrests most of us; the Church others. Some are now arrested by 'the social state,' which (says Tarde) 'is, like the hypnotic state, only a form of a dream.' So a supra-social philosophy is often called unsocial; Plotinus, like other mystics, has incurred this censure. To the Platonists, all earthly forms of association are at best adumbrations of a true society; he cannot give himself entirely to any of them. He must expect to outgrow many early enthusiasms before the end of his course. For this life is a '*schola animarum*,' as Origen said; and we are but learners to the end. The future is hidden from us; but hidden through the darkness the light of heaven burns steadily before us; and we know that 'yonder,' amid the eternal ideas of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, is our birth-place and our final home.

*'Si notre vie est moins qu'une journée
En l'éternel; si l'an qui fait le tour
Chasse nos jours sans espoir de retour;
Si périssable est toute chose née;
Que songes-tu, mon âme emprisonnée?
Pourquoi te plaît l'obscur de notre jour,
Si, pour voler en un plus clair séjour,
Tu as au dos l'aile bien empennée?
Là est le bien que tout esprit désire,
Là le repos où tout le monde aspire,
Là est l'amour, là le plaisir encore!
Là, ô mon âme, au plus haut ciel guidée
Tu y pourras reconnaître l'idée
De la beauté qu'en ce monde j'adore.'*

{Joachim Du Bellay}